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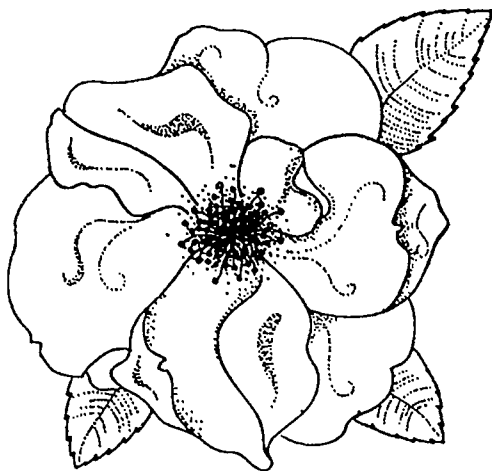
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## ABSTRACT

These proceedings contain 54 papers and an abstract of a panel discussion on women's issues in adult education that were presented at a conference on adult education research. The following are among the papers included: "Reducing Dropout in Distance Education" (Belawati); "Examination of the Validity of the Education Participation Scale (EPS) and Adult Attitudes toward Continuing Education Scale (AACES)" (Blunt, Yang); "Imaginary Institution of Adult Education" (Briton); "Myth of Self-directed Work Teams and the Ineffectiveness of Team Effectiveness Training" (Brooks); "Participatory Literacy Practices" (Campbell); "Seeing Is Believing" (Carriere); "Remapping Adult Education" (Collard); "Examining the Case for Class Analysis in Adult Education Research" (Collins, Collard); "Use of Learning Strategies" (Conti, Kolody); "U.S. Educational Policy and Adult Education" (Cunningham); "Identification, Assessment and Implications of an Organization's Learning System for the Practice of Adult Education in Organizational Settings" (Davis, Ziegler); "Perceptions of Adult Literacy Policy and Practice" (Dilworth); "Use of Reflection-in-Action by Adult Educators" (Ferry); "Adult Women's Learning in Higher Education" (Flannery, Hayes); "Intuition in Adult Education" (Garrison); "Pictures, Perspectives, Profiles" (Grace, Plumb); "Toward a Level Playing Field" (Hansman-Ferguson, Garofolo); "Recent Strategic Planning Decisions by the University of Alberta and Their

Implications for Its Faculty of Extension" (Haughey); "Media, Technology, and Literacy in Immigrant and Multicultural Contexts" (Hemphill, Ianiro, Raffa); "Fugitive and Codified Knowledge" (Hill); "Britain's Forgotten Minister of Adult Education" (Holford); "Do Universities Support Multiple Role Women Students?" (Home); "A New Model of SLA (Second Language Acquisition) and Its Implications in Teaching ESL (English as a Second Language) to Adult Learners" (Hu); "Collegiate Involvement from an Adult Undergraduate Perspective" (Kasworm); "Power and Planning in Environmental Education" (McDonald et al.); "Social Definitional Approach to the Crisis of Literacy" (Melichar); "Effects of Institutional Context on Critical Thinking in the Workplace" (Mishoe); "Community-Based Organizations and Mainstream Educational Change" (Podeschi); "Racial Formation in the Reporting of Canadian Immigration" (Schick); and "Significance of Including the Lived Experiences of African Americans in Adult Basic Education Curriculum and Planning" (Sheared). Many papers include substantial bibliographies. (MN)

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# *36th Annual* **Adult Education Research Conference**

May 19 - 21, 1995

University of Alberta

Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

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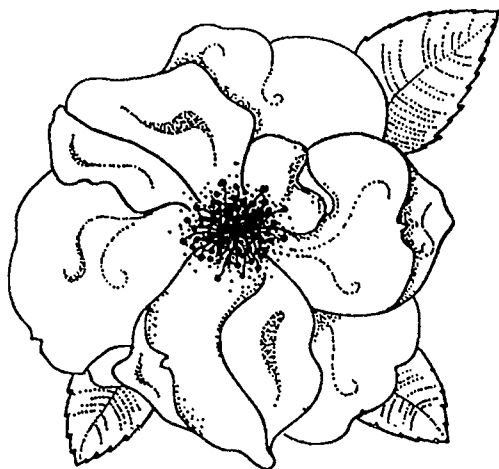


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## Notice

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Pauline Collette  
Bert Einsiedel  
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Dear AERC Participants:

Welcome to the 36th Annual Adult Education Conference in Edmonton. By participating in the conference you join scholars, students, and practitioners from all over the world who practice and study adult education.

The AERC conference has a tradition of advancing the knowledge in adult education. It has an international reputation as a venue for established and beginning researchers to present new methodologies, topics, and paradigms. The papers in the Proceedings represent a continuing dialogue on the changes that are occurring in adult education. These changes are important to debate and record to reflect the times and nature of adult education. Research from a decade ago reflects a different emphasis and orientation. The research presented at AERC often leads adult education into new directions that enliven and promote the field.

AERC is a forum and a retreat for students, faculty, and practitioners to meet and dialogue in a collegial environment which promotes inquiry and debate. During your stay at AERC we hope you will enter into the lively discussions that historically occur at AERC.

We wish to acknowledge our hosts at the University of Alberta for their hard work and dedication to putting on the AERC conference. We know it is difficult to plan and execute a conference while attending to studies, research, and service during the year. We thank our hosts for making all of this possible.

Sincerely,

The 36th Annual Adult Education Research Conference Steering Committee:

Daniele Flannery	(1993-1995)	Pennsylvania State University
Vanessa Sheared	(1993-1995)	San Francisco State University
Sean Courtney	(1994-1996)	University of Nebraska
Scipio A. J. Colin, III	(1994-1996)	North Carolina State University

Dear AERC Participants:

Welcome to all participants in the 36th Annual Adult Education Research Conference. The faculty and staff of the Department of Educational Policy Studies, Faculty of Education, at the University of Alberta wish you a most pleasant and enlightened educational experience during your time in Edmonton.

AERC is a unique conference where adult educators from all over the world come to share their research. The conference is meant to be a relaxed event which fosters professional collaboration among scholars and students who generate research and utilize research findings in adult education. We have tried to schedule spaces for informal gatherings and dialogue periodically scattered throughout the conference.

To the many conference presenters who have traveled from many parts of the world, we extend our gratitude for your strength and willingness to participate in this year's AERC. Through your efforts we are confident of the continuing success of this conference.

To the many volunteers who have worked hard to make this AERC a special experience for all participants, we extend our thanks. A special thanks goes to students and volunteers on the AERC planning committee who essentially ran the conference.

Sincerely,

Sue M. Scott  
Co-Coordinator

Dave J. Collett  
Co-Coordinator

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Author</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
ARL™ Inquiry	Life on the Seesaw: Tensions in an Action Reflection Learning™ Program	1
Belawati, Tian	Reducing Dropout in Distance Education: A Contextual Approach	7
Blunt, Adrian & Yang, Baiyin	An Examination of the Validity of the Education Participation Scale (EPS) and the Adult Attitudes toward Continuing Education Scale (AACES)	13
Boshier, Roger	Words from the Edge: A Postmodern Reflection on Coolie Verner and the Black Book	19
Briton, Derek	The Imaginary Institution of Adult Education: A Reassessment of the Field's Collective Identity	27
Brookfield, Stephen	Storming the Citadel: Engaging Adult Educators in the Critical Analysis of Adult Educational Theory	35
Brooks, Ann K.	The Myth of Self-directed Work Teams and the Ineffectiveness of Team Effectiveness Training: An Argument with Special Reference to Teams that Produce Knowledge	41
Campbell, Pat	Participatory Literacy Practices: Creating Possibilities	49
Carrière, Elizabeth	Seeing is Believing: Educating through a Gender Lens	55
Collard, Susan	Remapping Adult Education: Beyond Social Movement & Professionalization	63
Collins, Michael & Collard, Sue	Examining the Case for Class Analysis in Adult Education Research	69
Conti, Gary J. & Kolody, Rita	The Use of Learning Strategies: An International Perspective	77
Cunningham, Phyllis M.	U.S. Educational Policy and Adult Education: Social Control; Social Demand; and Professional Adult Educator Participation	83

<u>Author</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
Davis, Dent C. & Ziegler, Mary F.	The Identification, Assessment and Implications of an Organization's Learning System for the Practice of Adult Education in Organizational Settings	91
Dilworth, Robert, L.	Perceptions of Adult Literacy Policy and Practice: A Survey of Leaders in the Field	97
Dirkx, John M., Babchuk, Wayne A. & Sharpe, Tom L.	Opening the Black Box: Toward a Field Systems Approach to the Study of Teaching in Adult Education	103
Ferry, Natalie M.	The Use of Reflection-in-Action by Adult Educators: An Inquiry into Schön's Epistemology of Practice	109
Flannery, Daniele D. & Hayes, Elisabeth	Adult Women's Learning in Higher Education: A Critical Review of Scholarship	115
Garrison, D.R.	Intuition in Adult Education: A Non-intuitive View	121
Grace, André P. & Plumb, Donovan	Pictures, Perspectives, Profiles: Reflections on Interviews with Critical Adult Educators	127
Hansman-Ferguson, C & Garofolo, Patricia	Toward a Level Playing Field: The Roles of Mentors and Critical Friendships in the Lives of Women Doctoral Students	133
Haughey, Dennis	Recent Strategic Planning Decisions by the University of Alberta and their Implications for its Faculty of Extension	139
Heaney, Tom	Learning to Control Democratically: Ethical Questions in Situated Adult Education	147
Hemphill, David F., Ianiro, Sally L. & Raffa, Damien A.	Media, Technology, and Literacy in Immigrant and Multicultural Contexts	153
Hill, Robert J.	Fugitive and Codified Knowledge: The Struggle to Control the Meaning of Environmental Hazards	163
Holford, John	Britain's Forgotten Minister of Adult Education: Arthur Creech Jones and a Socialist Strategy for Development and Democracy in Africa	171

<u>Author</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
Holtslander, Cathy	Annie Hollis, Adult Education, and the Development of Socialist Political Culture on the Prairies, 1917 to 1938	177
Home, Alice	Do Universities Support Multiple Role Women Students?	183
Hu, Jiazhen	A New Model of SLA and its Implications in Teaching ESL to Adult Learners	189
Johnson-Bailey, Juanita	Making A Way Out Of No Way: An Examination of the Educational Narratives of Reentry Black Women with Emphasis on Issues of Race, Gender, Class, and Color	195
Kasworm, Carol E.	Collegiate Involvement from an Adult Undergraduate Perspective	201
McDonald, Barbara Blanche, Catalino Krause, Katrina & Brown, Michael	Power and Planning in Environmental Education	207
Melichar, Ken	A Social Definitional Approach to the Crisis of Literacy: Contestory Definitions of Literacy as Skills, Information, and Critique	213
Mishoe, Shelley C.	The Effects of Institutional Context on Critical Thinking in the Workplace	221
Nesbit, Tom	Lost in Space: Mathematics Education for Adults	229
Orem, Richard A.	Measuring the Public's Perceptions of Adult Basic Education	235
Plumb, Donovan	Critical Adult Education and Identity in Postmodernity	241
Podeschi, Ronald	Community-Based Organizations and Mainstream Educational Change: Dynamics and Dilemmas	249
Price, Michael A. & Knowles, Evelyn	Learning and Motivation Associated with Changes in the Lives and Practices of Architects: A Study in Support of a Natural Learning Model for Professionals	255

<u>Author</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
Quigley, B. Allan	Literacy and Postmodernism: A Deconstruction Model for Analysis of our Myths, our Past, and our Profession	261
Rose, Amy D. & O'Neill, Linda	The Individual in the Community: Horace Kallen, Cultural Pluralism and the Making of the Early Adult Education Movement	267
Rowland, Frank C.	Attempting to Destroy a People by Attacking Their Way of Knowing: A Case Study of the Northern Cheyenne	273
Schick, Carol	Racial Formation in the Reporting of Canadian Immigration	281
Schied, Fred M.	"How Did Humans Become Resources Anyway?": HRD and the Politics of Learning in the Workplace	287
Schmitt-Boshnick, M.	Spaces for Democracy: Researching the Social Learning Process	293
Scott, Sue M. Schmitt-Boshnick, M. & Lester, Shelley	Power and Program Planning in a Community-Based Context	299
Sheared, Vanessa	The Significance of Including the Lived Experiences of African Americans in Adult Basic Education Curriculum and Planning	305
Taylor, Edward W.	Beyond the Rhetoric: What Do the Empirical Studies Say About Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory	313
Tisdell, Elizabeth J. & Taylor, Edward W.	Out of the Closet: Lesbian and Gay Adult Educators and Sexual Orientation Issues in the University Learning Environment	321
Uhland, Roberta & Quigley, B. Allan	Retention and Literacy: An Investigation of Field Dependence/Field Independence and the Effects of Past Schooling	329
Welton, Michael R.	"Bolsheviks of a Better Sort": Jimmy Tompkins and the Struggle for a People's Catholicism, 1908-1928	337

<u>Author</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
Wilson, Arthur L. & Cervero, Ronald M.	Siting Program Planning Theory in Adult Education: The Selective Tradition of Privileging Technical Rationality	343
Wislock, Robert P.	The Effects of Group Cohesion on the Productivity of Advisory Groups that Plan Employee Training Programs in a University Setting	351
Yang, Baiyin	Explaining and Predicting Participation in Adult Education: A Longitudinal Study	357

#### PANEL

Lee, Jane Williams, Glenna Barwick-Snell, Katie Hayes, Elizabeth & Nolan, Bob	Women's Issues : Upward Mobility Through Adult Education	365
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# LIFE ON THE SEESAW: TENSIONS IN AN ACTION REFLECTION LEARNING™ PROGRAM

## ARL™ Inquiry<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

As organizations increasingly recognize a need for continuous learning, adult educators are gaining interest in techniques that will enable people to learn from their work. The literature suggests that people learn better when dealing with issues important to them. In the real world, however, important, strategic issues have deadlines and perceived constraints. This paper examines some of the tensions created between learning, and the action that needs to be taken to resolve these strategic issues in an Action Reflection Learning™ program.

### Introduction

In order to help bring about the continuous learning required in organizations in the nineties, educators are increasingly interested in ways of learning from the experience of actual work. One result is an increased use of the adult education method called Action Reflection Learning™ (ARL). ARL enables people to learn from projects that address actual strategic issues. The literature suggests that people learn better when they address issues that are important to them. Actual strategic issues, however, have deadlines and constraints. What are the tensions created between learning, the explicitly stated purpose of an ARL program, and the need of the participants to resolve the strategic business issue? What is the relationship between learning and task accomplishment?

In this paper—based on the results of research conducted in an ARL program—we begin to explore the answer to these questions. We start by defining ARL and discussing how the tension between action and learning is inherent in the definition, a tension which we describe with the metaphor of a seesaw. Next we provide information on the general structure of an ARL program as well as the specific program that is the study site. This provides the context for discussing our research. We then explain the methods used in the research, discuss our findings to date, and look at tentative conclusions and implications for adult learning.

### Action Reflection Learning™ Programs

Action Reflection Learning™ is a form of Action Learning (AL) practiced by Leadership in International Management Ltd. (LIM). AL draws its theoretical base from Reg Revans (1982), a British physicist, considered to be the “father” of AL. The relationships, and potential tensions, between task and learning begin to be framed by examining some of the definitions of ARL and AL. Pedler (1991) relates learning to action, and stipulates that one cannot take place without the other:

Action learning is an approach to the development of people in organizations which takes the task as the vehicle for learning. It is based on the premise that there is no learning without action and no sober and deliberate action without learning. . . . The method has been

pioneered in work organizations and has three main components—people, who accept the responsibility for taking action on a particular issue; problems, or the tasks that people set themselves; and a set of six or so colleagues who support and challenge each other to make progress on problems. (pp. xxii-xxiii)

An important focus of this method is on helping participants to learn through critical reflection and the reframing of the strategic problems faced by the team. As participants work their problem, they learn to learn and think critically. Using the help of a Project Team Advisor (PTA), and their teammates, they begin to reframe the problem and see the situation in new ways. This type of learning may begin to create tensions between task and learning, since as the team learns, members are likely to begin questioning some of the fundamental assumptions that underlie the way in which strategic problems are typically framed in their organizations.

ARL programs usually take place over a six to nine month period during which project teams meet as a group four times in week-long residential sessions. Participants work on, and learn from, their projects with the intervention assistance of the PTA; attend appropriate seminars; and engage in other activities that fit the program's focus. Between these residential sessions, participants return to their jobs, but continue to work on their projects.

The program that is the subject of the research reported here is being run in a large, international food company that has decided to function as a global company. The ARL program was co-developed with the company to address seven key issues identified in a survey: teamwork, employee development, trust, leadership, communications, conflict management, and innovation and change. Twenty managers from various parts of the organization participated in each iteration of the program. They formed four project teams of five people each. Each team was facilitated by a LIM PTA who helped participants to critically reflect, question assumptions, and reframe their tasks. Each project was sponsored by a high level executive and had been selected based on its strategic importance to the company.

### Research Methodology

This has been an ongoing ethnographic study using a participant observer at each program session. This role has allowed close contact with the participants while being unobtrusive. The observer has collected data via observations, note taking, and opportunistic interviews. Overt participation was minimal. Initial interviews, directed toward assessing the program's impact within the company, were also initiated. After each program session, the data were jointly analyzed by ARL™ Inquiry, a five member research team. This "kitchen cabinet" helped analyze the data by identifying developmental themes, provided a point of triangulation, and helped structure the participant observer role for the next session.

### Tensions between Task Focus and Learning Focus

There are always tensions in any learning experience between performance that demonstrates existing capabilities, and entrance into a vulnerable space where one

tries out new knowledge and skill. ARL™ programs, however, increase tension because people work in real situations, and as a result, get real-time feedback from internal organizational clients and peers. In this section, we discuss some of the tensions between learning and resolving the strategic business problems that lead us to describe ARL programs with the metaphor, "life on a seesaw."

The first set of tensions results from the fact that the projects were real and highly visible. The corporation is task-oriented and expects tangible results, given that significant development resources were being spent on these programs; and people back home were not yet sure that the program created tangible results. Participants felt a tension between expectations for clearly stated behaviors and clear performance results, versus expectations that they "learn," which involved outcomes that could not be as clearly articulated and that were not as easily understood. They felt that they were being evaluated on the outcomes of the program, and in some cases they were. During the first week, participants commented that they felt guilty spending time in the program because their peers were not yet clear that time spent in this program was worth the investment.

People were frequently aware of the visibility of their results. Questions were being raised about the cost of the program in a downsizing mode. The program director pointed out, "... we're in financial pain in this company . . . it's only been within the last couple of quarters, we're spending a lot of money on this program, we're trying to assess how well this program is working. People are curious, they ask questions." Interviews with non-program-participants in the company suggest that people were watching to see the extent to which projects were implemented and results achieved, as illustrated by the following comment: "A major risk is that people throughout (the company) will make judgments if this approach works. If management can't follow through—if they don't implement the recommendations—people will lose confidence."

The issue of evaluation was raised explicitly by one member:

I never expected it to be like a primal scream therapy, where we roll on the floor, explore our souls and inner self. This is a management development program and I expected that how I perform might affect my career. I expect that how our project comes out may affect my career. I always speak out at these things, but someone told me that they are intimidated by the silence of some who used to speak out.

The program places participants in situations in which they must take responsibility for determining how much risk they are willing to take. We hypothesize that they experience a dilemma in that avoidance of risk is itself a risky alternative, and certainly detrimental to learning.

### Tensions between Time Required for Learning and Task

The second set of tensions is between the time required for learning and the time required for attention to the task. Early in the program, when under time stress, groups tended not to take time to reflect. However, those groups which did reflect, once they got past the deadline, could begin to see what they learned from the

experience. When people took the time to reflect, despite time pressure, the quality of their learning at times seemed higher.

In the first week, the participant observer reflected that "individuals are experiencing various insights." He inferred that these insights had not yet been translated through reflection into action because he did not yet see new behaviors. One participant stated, "I've gained a lot of new insights, but not yet learned."

By week two, one group experienced conflict and took time off-line, including a specially scheduled dinner, to address this conflict. In their debriefing, this group said, "We had an up and down week. We re-formed well . . ., bonding again. Then we got ahead of ourselves, had conflict, and had to go back and re-form, still norming." They went around the table and asked if they were still a team. "We're all different personalities, [and have] different needs, and we agreed we would continue by consensus." Another member of the group said:

In regard to [the forming-storming-norming model] . . . depending on what we are doing, we are all three things at one time. We are most aware of the process, stopping ourselves. We raise awareness about ourselves, and there's a different level of comfort learning about that.

Communication is the glue that keeps us together.

Another said, "We are most vulnerable in trying to meet deadlines. [Person X] and I are very different; I am unimpressed by deadlines. [Person X] wants to meet deadlines under pressure. We are out of control. That's the only danger for us."

Late one night in the third weekly seminar, one group was preparing to participate in an "audit" process in which groups critique one another's work. One member felt that when he tried to make contributions, others would override him in order to complete the task. When the group did the stop-reflect,<sup>2</sup> they recognized what they had done and commented that their process had fallen apart.

### Tensions between Group Conflict and Harmony

The third set of tensions has to do with maintaining harmony in order to perform the group task as opposed to surfacing and dealing with the conflict that might be needed for deeper learning to take place. One participant observed, "if no conflict, you get nothing." The groups that were most open in dealing with their conflicts and disagreements also had the most innovative outcomes. In two groups, for example, when power was assumed by someone in the group, others in the group confronted this. By contrast, in a third group, members were reticent to assume power, and as a result, they were continually dependent on the skills of the ARL PTA. In the fourth group, the issue of power was raised, but the group consensually ignored the power issue, choosing instead to replicate the hierarchical relationships extant in the organizational culture. One member said:

There's an issue . . . people are upset about it, rather than confront it, or address it, they buzz . . . . There's a lot of confusion, but it remains undiscussable . . . it was clear that (Person X) and a couple of others were shocked that it had been brought up this way. . . . confront(ing) it head on was a strange issue. . . . it struck me very, very clearly that . . .



the power of action reflection learning is that it does permit this to happen. The company norms were right there in the room.

We hypothesized that groups that could surface and deal with conflict would be able to think in new ways about the task, and as a result, could learn at deeper levels.

### Implications for Learning Theory

The theoretical base of ARL™ is not clearly defined, but we believe that the model contains elements of two, somewhat contrasting, learning theories: the scientific problem-solving model or the American pragmatic school, embodied in the work of John Dewey; and the life-world model, that holds various interpretations depending upon the school of phenomenology with which it might be associated. Yorks (1994) summarizes the roots and essence of Dewey's theory of learning from experience:

In Dewey's pragmatism how one learns from his or her experience is couched in concepts derived from the scientific method. Darwinism had influenced Pierce and James and had a strong direct influence on Dewey (1910) as well. The empirical methods of new objective psychology were also influential on his thinking. In education he called for the controlled type of learning exemplified in science (Elias & Merriam, 1980). Mezirow (1991) writes that for Dewey reflection meant validity testing in the sense of rational problem solving. (pp. 23-24)

By contrast, the phenomenological focus is more oriented to "what Husserl called the life-world—i.e. the world in which we are immersed in the natural attitude that never becomes an object as such for us" (Yorks, 1994, pp. 28-29). At the risk of oversimplifying, we can identify several assumptions of the continental school of phenomenology vis-a-vis learning from experience:

All meaning is intersubjective, contingent on social construction on the part of humans who are immersed in a structurally pre-given life-world. Objective science is part of this life-world. Human actors make sense of their daily life through a dialogic relationship. The meaning of a theoretical proposition comes into being only in the context of a particular application or individual history. (Ibid., p. 34)

Learning from experience in the phenomenological tradition is often uncomfortable. Learning takes place when something in one's taken-for-granted life-world becomes problematic and is therefore disorienting. "From a hermeneutic phenomenological perspective, learning is an act of interpretation. It involves a fusion of horizons between the horizon of the person [who is immersed in his or her life world] and the horizon of the lived experience that is the object of attention" (Ibid., p. 35). New meaning emerges from that fusion of horizons.

For the purpose of examining the interplay of these polarities in the ARL™ approach to learning, we have cast these models in terms of polarities that are purer than can be sustained in either theory. We use the data in this case to raise questions about the contrast between these two models, even though the data and the inferences drawn from them are preliminary.

## Conclusions

We believe that these two underlying theories, a strong emphasis on problem solving and the additional orientation of the life-world concept, play a role in helping to create the tension that appears to exist between task and learning in an ARL™ program and that evokes the idea of "life on a seesaw." Participants come into the program with a strong pragmatic, problem solving focus. This focus fits well with the pragmatic part of the base of the program. Participants are quickly introduced, however, to concepts such as stop-reflect, that cause them to begin to question their taken-for-granted life-world. Early in the program, participants do not always understand the value of this type of learning, so they begin to experience tension between the need to meet expectations and produce results, and the need to take time to work through what, for some, is an uncomfortable experience.

As the program progresses, many participants and groups begin to better understand the important relationship between the learning that comes from the examination of the meanings and assumptions they hold about themselves, their group and their task; and the successful completion of the task itself. There is evidence in this program that participants who become aware of this different learning frequently pushed away from a narrow focus on solving the project problem toward examining events in their life world that were uncomfortable for them, and that therefore became problematic. We believe that such examination could result in a deeper level of learning that goes beyond the immediate project and requisite task-related skills. Although tension continues to exist, these participants and groups recognize the value, and have the skills, to be able to manage it.

<sup>1</sup> ARL™ Inquiry is a research group affiliated with Leadership in International Management Ltd. Data were collected by Lyle Yorks, Eastern Connecticut State University. Analysis and ideas were jointly developed with Yorks and the following people (alphabetical order): Robert Kolodny, Adjunct, New School for Social Research; Victoria Marsick, Teachers College, Columbia University; Glenn Nilson, Eastern Connecticut State University; and Judy O'Neil, Adjunct, Teachers College, Columbia University. O'Neil and Marsick took the lead in writing up the jointly developed analysis.

<sup>2</sup> The "stop and reflect" is a regular feature of ARL programs. Participants "stop" the work they are doing to "reflect," individually and as a group, on what they are learning about themselves, the project work, and their interaction as a learning group.

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## REDUCING DROPOUT IN DISTANCE EDUCATION: A CONTEXTUAL APPROACH

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**Abstract:** Dropout phenomenon needs to be understood within the context in which the problem occurs. This study tested the effectiveness of several institutional interventions in reducing early attrition in distance education within Indonesian context.

### Background

Dropout is a continuing problem in post secondary education. However, due to its nature, the concern for this problem in distance education is probably higher than that in conventional education.

Despite the variation in dropout definition and/or measurement, studies have shown that dropout rates in distance education are very high (Woodley and Parlett, 1983; Black, 1992). Furthermore, literature shows that newly-enrolled students are those who are significantly at risk of dropping out. In fact, a high attrition rate in the initial stages of study is a pattern in many studies of dropout (Roberts, 1984).

This is also the situation at the Indonesian Open University (Universitas Terbuka-UT). Its statistics show that the average completion rate of a particular "cohort" (students who registered at the same academic year) is only 4.8 percent of enrollment. This means that over 95 percent of students either withdraw or do not continuously maintain their study. Furthermore, statistics show that, on average, over 46 percent of new enrollees do not re-register in their second semester immediately after their first one.

Even though literature has shown that dropout is a complex phenomenon, it can be understood through analyzing personal characteristics and the learning environment. Dropout models developed by Tinto (1975), Kember (1989) and others show that dropout or persistence is influenced by the success of students integration process with both social and academic environment during their learning experiences. Therefore, institutional interventions to reduce dropout (or to increase persistence) should be based on the total context in which learners must operate.

### Framework

Students' decisions about continuing or withdrawing from the program are made based on a cost-benefit analysis of their participation which, essentially, is the analysis of the success of their integration process or of the congruence between their personal characteristics, their social/work/family circumstances, and their academic circumstances. The more compatible the "off campus", "individual" and "academic" circumstances are, the easier it is for students to integrate their new academic lives into their present lives. Further, the more successful the integration process, the

more likely that students' initial goal commitments (whether extrinsic or intrinsic) are to be maintained or even enhanced; thus, the more likely it is for students to persist. Accordingly, if persistence is to be enhanced, the institution should design the academic circumstances in a way so that students will find it easier to deal with and to integrate the academic environment into social, work, and family circumstances.

Based on the analysis of the Indonesian context, it is apparent that Indonesians are less prepared to be fully independent learners as they are expected by the system than distance learners in western countries from where the system was adopted. Dropout at UT is mainly the result of a combination between the characteristics of weaker students (lack of technical and psychological preparedness) and strenuous circumstances (family and work responsibilities resulting in conflicts in time and funding, and institutional failings including a lack of communication and feedback, lack of guidance and support, lack of choice of instructional media to match the learning style, and the low-quality of course materials).

In accordance with that, the university should give students the opportunity to gradually learn, adapt to, and adopt an unfamiliar academic system through, namely, a "transition stage. This is to allow students to shift from being fully guided students to being semi independent ones. Thus, during this stage students should be provided with some "conventional" teaching methods (i.e. fully guided teaching method), but at the same time also be given the opportunity to learn to be independent learners. This means, students should be guided; but, the guidance should be given in a way that will still require students to "act" on their own initiative. The institution should provide only the necessary information, suggestions, and encouragement without telling the students what to do and how to do it. In this way, students will have to decide for themselves the best thing to do and the best way to do it, in their own contexts.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this research was to test the effectiveness of the "transition stage" interventions derived from the developed contextual framework in reducing early attrition rates at the Indonesian Open University (UT).

### **Methodology**

The total of 1095 new students (who enrolled by September, 1993) at the Indonesian Open University were randomly selected and assigned to either the control or one of five experimental groups which represent the proposed transition stage with increasing level of interventions (contacts). Students in each experimental group were contacted regularly (throughout the semester) through letters containing independent learning strategies, peer names and addresses, information, reminders, and encouragement.

Persistence rate was measured through the actual behavior of re-registration in the second semester. Quantitative data were collected from the Computer Center of the university and qualitative data were gathered through interviews with 16 selected students.



## Findings

### Treatments effects on re-registration.

Data were analyzed using the logistic regression technique. Table 1 summarizes the results.

Table 1. Treatment Effects on Re-registration

VARIABLE	B	S.E.	DF	SIG	R	EXP(B)
TIMELAG	.0225	.0140	1	.1070	.0202	1.0228
SP			6	.3594	.0000	
SP(1)	.4214	.2044	1	.0392	.0391	1.5241
SP(2)	.0787	.2721	1	.7725	.0000	1.0818
SP(3)	.2812	.4088	1	.4915	.0000	1.3247
SP(4)	-.0501	.2782	1	.8570	.0000	.9511
SP(5)	.1282	.1959	1	.5128	.0000	1.1368
SP(6)	.0941	.5968	1	.8747	.0000	1.0987
EMP	.4817	.1691	1	.0044	.0645	1.6188
TEST	.0047	.0020	1	.0198	.0483	1.0047
EXAM	.0138	.0038	1	.0003	.0866	1.0139
GPA	1.3766	.1971	1	.0000	.1783	3.9613
TREAT			5	.4706	.0000	
TREAT1	-.1783	.2415	1	.4603	.0000	.8367
TREAT2	-.0311	.2462	1	.8996	.0000	.9694
TREAT3	-.2589	.2418	1	.2842	.0000	.7719
TREAT4	-.0037	.2470	1	.9879	.0000	.9963
TREAT5	.2344	.2514	1	.3511	.0000	1.2642
Const.	-3.3908	.4036	1	.0000		

Variables TREAT1 through TREAT5 show the individual effect of each treatment level on re-registration as they were compared to the performance of the control group. Other variables shown in the table (study program for which students are registered-SP, employment status-EMP, the percentage of self-test submitted per the total registered courses-TEST, the percentage of examination written per the total registered courses-EXAM, and grade point average-GPA) are control variables previously found to be significantly related to the dependent variable.

The Exp(B) shown in the last column shows the association which approximates how much more likely (or unlikely) it is for an outcome to be present among those where  $x=1$  (those in one of the treatment groups being compared) than

among those where  $x=0$  (those in the control group). For example, the value of  $\text{Exp}(B)$  of  $\text{WORK} = 1.488$  indicates that re-registration occurs 1.5 times as often among working students than among non-working students in the sample. The table shows that in general, except for students in Treatment Group III, the  $\text{Exp}(B)$  coefficients for the treatment variables show that the occurrences of re-registration among students in the treatment groups took place approximately as often as among students in the Control Group. This means that treatments did not seem to have significant influences on re-registration. Control variables that are still significant contributors to the explanation of students' actual re-registration were employment status (EMP), the rate of self-test submissions (TEST), the rate of examinations attendance (EXAM), and Grade Point Average (GPA).

### Student's Likelihood of Persistence.

Logistic regression allows us to see whether the increased level of contacts did increase students' likelihood to re-register to some extent. Knowledge about these likelihoods/ probabilities will give further information about whether or not the treatments would still be useful if they were designed differently and were given simultaneously with other supporting interventions. Table 2 shows the result of this analysis.

Table 2. Students' Probability of Re-registration\*

Employment Status		Treatment Group				
		I	II	III	IV	V
Working		.65	.68	.64	.69	.74
	Control	.73	.70	.75	.69	.64
Not working		.54	.58	.52	.58	.64
	Control	.63	.59	.65	.58	.53

\* Using the average year of time-lag, of examinations rate and of GPA.

It is obvious from the table that, regardless of the treatments, the probability of working students re-registering is greater than that of non-working students. This is consistent with the fact that employment status has a significant positive relationship with re-registration, that is working students were more likely to re-register than non-working students. The table further shows that only students in Treatment Group V, who received the highest level of contacts, have a higher average (means) probability of re-registration than students in the control group, who did not receive any contact at all. This means that lower level or less frequent contacts provided to the students did not seem to encourage students to re-register. In fact, students who received the first three treatments, which were given during the semester, had a lower probability of re-registration than their peers in the control group. This seems to suggest that the last contact, which was the final reminding letter of re-registration (and was received by students approximately 2 weeks before the closing date of re-registration period), was the one that encouraged students to "act" or actually re-register.

In short, the contacts offered during the transition stage, even though not statistically significant, did seem to have impact in increasing students' likelihood to re-register if they were given at the right time and with sufficient frequency. Furthermore, regardless of whether or not students received any treatment, working students were more likely to re-register in their second semester than were non-working students.

### **Student's Perception on Treatments.**

Despite the insignificant result of the quantitative analysis, the interview shows that most students found the treatment letter(s) to be encouraging, reminding and motivating regarding their study commitments. Furthermore, most students found the independent learning strategies brochure to be useful in helping them find their own learning strategies; and the list of peer names and addresses to be helpful in giving them the sense of grouping, but not in finding them friends to study with. The interview also reveals that students persistence seemed to be correlated with students' time available for studying and their study load. Furthermore, based on the analysis of students' comments, it seems that the treatments provided were still "too non-directed" and "full of options" for students (who seemed to be still looking for teacher figures). In short, interviewed students suggested that the treatments enhanced their collective affiliation (with both the institution and their peer) but not their normative congruence (the compatibility of value system such as teaching-learning method) with UT.

### **Summary and Discussion**

This study shows that dropout is indeed a complex phenomenon and is highly context bound. It is clear that dropout is a result of interactions between multiple factors and there is no single "easy" way of solving this problem. Indeed, the interviews suggest that the effects of the treatments might have been more significant had there been opportunity and time to integrate the test design more fully with the other relevant interventions such as lower study load. Furthermore, this study also suggests that the interventions might have been more successful if they were designed in accordance with students' needs (such as direct guidance).

The implication of these findings is obvious; if help is to be really useful for students, interventions have to be designed to suit the characteristics and the needs of the particular students. If "direction" or "conventional teaching style" is what students need, that has to be provided regardless of whether or not it violates the principles of "adult teaching methods" found in official academic literature. The most important thing is that students are unique so learning-teaching systems should be designed to accommodate their characteristics and not on some other basis. The changing of student behavior should be expected to be a gradual process and should be accommodated accordingly.

In summary, this study shows that adoption of any educational system should be adapted to its local context to be successful. This study, regardless of the insignificant effects of the tested interventions on student persistence, has helped in explaining some of the missing "puzzles" in the phenomenon of dropout. That is, the importance of analyzing the dropout problem within a larger context than the academic and student's personal circumstances, namely within the cultural and educational traditions of the learning program in question.

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## AN EXAMINATION OF THE VALIDITY OF THE EDUCATION PARTICIPATION SCALE (EPS) AND THE ADULT ATTITUDES TOWARD CONTINUING EDUCATION SCALE (AACES).

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Confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling, with LISREL as the estimation technique, were used to assess the validity of the Education Participation Scale (EPS) and the Adult Attitudes Toward Continuing Education Scale (AACES). Results of the analyses revealed: 1) the six factor structure of the EPS to be reproducible and the three factor structure of the AACES to be weak and poorly determined, 2) acceptable levels of convergent and concurrent validity for the EPS and a revised version of the AACES, 3) weak evidence of discriminant validity for each scale, and 4) poor predictive validity for both scales

The Education Participation Scale (EPS) (Boshier 1971; Boshier & Collins 1983, 1985) and the Adult Attitude Toward Continuing Education Scale (AACES) (Darkenwald & Hayes 1988, Hayes & Darkenwald 1990) are the two most widely recognized instruments in adult education participation research. While information on the psychometric properties and evidence of the reproducibility and validity of the EPS has been accumulating over the last 20 years, little comparable information is available for the AACES. In fact the literature reveals concerns regarding the stability of AACES factors and their 'passenger' items and the scale's discriminant validity (Blunt 1990, Hayes & Darkenwald 1990). This study extends the findings of an earlier report on the two scales which concluded that the EPS and the AACES were not measuring discrete psychological constructs and that the AACES was unstable and in need of further development (Blunt 1990).

### Method

#### Subjects<sup>1</sup>

Subjects were 458 adult learners enrolled in a variety of adult education programs offered by the University of Saskatchewan and other adult education agencies Saskatchewan. The sample consisted of 240 males (52.9%) and 218 females (47.1%), with a mean age of 35 years (sd 11yrs) and 13.4 years of schooling. The subjects were largely white collar, middle class, well educated persons enrolled in a continuing professional education or general interest adult education class.

#### Data Collection

The 40 item EPS (F version<sup>2</sup>) and the 22 item AACES were combined in a single survey instrument with the response directions, order of items and scaling categories being reproduced exactly as the scale developers had previously used them. A five item behavioral index (BI) of participation was used to assess levels of prior adult education participation. Respondents were also asked to provide information on their age, sex and years of schooling completed.

### Data Analysis

The data analysis began with conventional exploratory factor analysis to determine whether the scales would yield their anticipated factor structures from the data set and proceeded through three stages of confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling using LISREL 7 (SPSS 1993). In the first stage the two scales were independently submitted to confirmatory factor analysis (Joreskog & Sorbom 1989) to assess their latent structures. Second, the two scales were modified to improve their fit indices and then subjected to confirmatory factor analysis with LISREL as the estimation technique to test the hypotheses that six factors underlie the 40 items of the EPS and three factors underlie the 22 items of the AACES as claimed by the scale developers. For the third stage the scales were used in two structural equation models to test their predictive validity with the BI as the endogenous indicator of participation. Correlation matrices, rather than covariance matrices, were the inputs and maximum likelihood was the estimation method selected for each of the LISREL analyses.

### Results

Conventional factor analysis produced the anticipated factor structure for each scale. The EPS data set yielded nine eigenvalues greater than 1.0 and a scree test clearly indicated a six-factor solution. The AACES data set yielded five eigenvalues greater than unity and a scree test indicated a three-factor solution. The alpha coefficients obtained compared favorably with those reported previously by the scale developers ranging from .65 to .76 for the six motivational orientations of the EPS and .64 to .76 for the three sub scales of the AACES. (See Table 1) The reliability estimate for the five item BI was .68.

Table1: Means, Standard Deviations and Alpha Coefficients for EPS, AACES and Behavioral Index of Participation

Scale & Factors	M	SD	Alpha	Items
EPS				
Social Contact	13.5	4.7	.74	7
Cognitive Interest	16.7	4.6	.66	8
Professional Advancement	13.9	5.5	.71	6
Escape/Stimulation	11.2	4.0	.65	7
External Expectations	10.7	4.1	.66	6
Social Welfare	12.8	4.6	.67	6
Total EPS	80.8	20.2	.91	40
AACES				
Enjoyment of Learning	36.9	6.1	.76	9
Importance of Ad Ed	30.3	6.0	.75	8
Intrinsic Value of Ad Ed	18.6	3.7	.64	5
Total AACES	85.9	13.7	.88	22
BI				
Participation Index	3.0	1.4	.68	5

**Stage 1** Confirmatory factor analysis (Joreskog & Sorbom 1989) began with the factor structures proposed by their developers. Typically scale developers have accepted chi-square tests to confirm model-data fits and in this case to confirm the hypotheses that the EPS data set would yield six factors and the AACES data set



would yield three factors. However, chi-square has long been recognized to be sensitive to the effects of large sample sizes, there are other more helpful approaches to the estimation of data-model fit, and it is now recommended that several fit indices be used (Bollen 1989). LISREL allows for a more rigorous analysis of the goodness of fit of a data set with factors using several indices in addition to chi-square. The indices selected for this study<sup>3</sup> were GFI - the proportion of the joint variance and covariance of the model accounted for; AGFI - the GFI adjusted for the degrees of freedom relative to the number of constructs in the model, and RMSR - the square root of the mean of squared residuals. For the GFI and AGFI coefficients, the value sought is 1.0 and for the RMSR 0.0. Chi-square in goodness of fit analyses can be thought of as a measure rather than a test statistic (Joreskog & Sorbom 1989) with a high value corresponding to a bad fit and a low value to a good fit. The degrees of freedom serve as a bench mark against which to judge whether chi-square values for different models are high or low (See table 2).

Table 2: Chi-square and Fit Indices Values for EPS and AACES Measurement and Structural Equation Models

Measurement Models	$\chi^2$	df	p	$\chi^2/df$	GFI	AGFI	RMSR
<b>EPS</b>							
1. 40 item, 6 factor	4378.7	725	.00	6.04	.66	.62	.12
2. 38 item, 6 factor	4088.1	650	.00	6.29	.66	.61	.12
3. 22 item, 6 factor	748.1	194	.00	3.86	.87	.83	.07
<b>AACES</b>							
1. 22 item, 3 factor	1309.1	208	.00	6.29	.79	.74	.13
2. 19 item, 3 factor	946.8	150	.00	6.30	.82	.77	.11
3. 19 item 1 factor	841.4	135	.00	6.23	.82	.77	.08
4. 19 item, 2 factor	892.6	151	.00	5.91	.82	.77	.08
5. 15 item, 2 factor	416.8	89	.00	4.68	.89	.86	.06
<b>BI - Participation</b>							
5 item, 1 factor	13.3	5	.02	2.66	.99	.96	.04
<b>Struct. Equatn. Models</b>							
EPS	118.6	303	.00	3.69	.85	.81	.07
AACES	665.1	167	.00	3.98	.87	.84	.07

On the basis of the three LISREL fit indices for the 40 item, six factor EPS (GFI .66; AGFI .62; RMSR .12) and the 22 item, three factor AACES (GFI .79; AGFI .74; RMSR .13) it was recognized that the data-model fit for each scale was not very satisfactory. In contrast the 5 item, one factor BI achieved a highly satisfactory result (GFI .99; AGFI .96; RMSR .04). (See Table 2) Univariate analyses of the distributions on the scale items revealed two EPS items (#21 & #34) and three AACES items (#4, #6 & #13) to have responses resulting in extreme kurtosis or skewness. These items were deleted and the LISREL analysis was repeated with only marginal improvements in the data fit indices (See Table 2 for EPS 38 item & AACES 19 item fit indices).

**Stage 2** A series of analyses were conducted using modified measurement models of motivational orientations and attitude toward continuing education. On the evidence of the robustness of the factors obtained, a six factor structure was retained for the EPS while one, two and three factor models were tested for the AACES. To modify the measurement models items were deleted, one at a time, from each scale

based on LISREL modification indices which identified 'passenger' items with complex factor loading patterns. Those items loading most highly on tertiary and then secondary factors were removed first. This process continued until fit indices indicated the best measurement model was achieved. A balance of items and a minimum number of three items per factor was sought to avoid identification and convergence problems.<sup>4</sup>

The process yielded a superior measurement model for each construct (Table 2). The final analysis for the EPS yielded a 22 item, six factor model with greatly improved fit indices (GFI .87, AGFI .83, RMSR .07) (See Table 2). Little precision in measurement was lost in the six factors of the EPS by the reduction of scale items from 40 to 22. An overall alpha coefficient of .82 was achieved with factor alpha coefficients of .82 for Social Contact (3 items), .78 Cognitive Interest (4 items), .78 Professional Advancement (4 items), .67 Escape/Stimulation (5 items), .66 External Expectations (3 items) and .76 for Social Welfare (3 items). For the AACES a 15 item, two factor model was accepted<sup>5</sup>, also with greatly improved fit indices (GFI .89, AGFI .86, RMSR .06) (See Table 2). The overall alpha coefficient for the AACES model was .77 with coefficients of .75 for factor 1 (8 items) and .74 for factor 2 (7 items).

To examine the construct validity of the two scales the results of the stage two analyses (EPS 22 items, 6 factors & AACES 15 items, 2 factors) were used to construct a model with eight latent variables and 37 indicators. The chi-square value obtained ( $\chi^2=2348.8$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and the data-model fit indices (GFI .79, AGFI .76, RMSR .07) indicated a reasonably good level of model fit. Conventional concurrent validity analysis typically examines raw intercorrelations, a technique which does not take into account the effects of measurement error. LISREL analysis offers a powerful technique for the control of measurement error and provides a superior approach to concurrent validity analysis (Joreskog & Sorbom 1989). Eighteen of the correlations among the 28 possible latent variable correlations were statistically significant (See Table 3). Each of the eight latent variables was correlated with at least one other. Concurrent validity for each scale was indicated from the patterns of correlations which depicted the expected relationships.

Table 3: Latent Variable Correlation Coefficients

Latent Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Social Contact	1.00							
2. Cognitive Interest	.20*	1.0						
3. Professional Advancement	-.02	-.02	1.0					
4. Escape/Stimulation	.66**	.29**	.26**	1.0				
5. External Expectations	.17*	.01	.79**	.49**	1.0			
6. Social Welfare	.40**	-.01	.39**	.34**	.49**	1.0		
7. Attitude to Subject	.16*	.29**	-.02	-.01	-.25**	.11*	1.0	
8. Attitude to Situation	.14*	.36**	-.04	-.04	-.11	.09	.72**	1.0

\* $p<.05$  \*\* $p<.01$

Convergent validity for each of the constructs was indicated by the size and significance of the relationships between the latent variables within their respective constructs (e.g. Attitude,  $G = .72$ ,  $p<.01$ ). Discriminant validity is generally indicated when correlations are found to be larger and stronger between latent variables of the same construct than between latent variables across constructs. In this case, while the correlations between variables within each construct are larger and stronger than



those of the correlations across the two constructs there are sufficiently large and statistically significant correlations between four of the motivational orientation variables and the two attitude variables to suggest that the two are highly related and not fully discrete psychological constructs.

**Stage 3** To test for predictive validity two structural equations were developed, one for motivational orientations and one for attitude, with BI entered as the endogenous variable for participation behavior. The fit indices are reported in Table 2. Only 16% of the variance in BI was explained by the combined EPS factors and Professional Advancement was the sole significant predictor ( $G = .53$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Both attitude factors were significant predictors of participation behavior (A-Subject  $G = .20$ ,  $p < .05$ ; A-Situation  $G = .43$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and explained 27% of the variance.

### Discussion and Conclusions

LISREL offers major advantages over the use of conventional factor analysis and structural modeling techniques including the control of measurement error. It was not surprising therefore that the analyses would reveal serious problems with the factor structure of the AACES. Hayes and Darkenwald (1990) had previously recognized the presence of 'passenger' items which maintained significantly high loadings on factors derived by orthogonal rotation methods. Also one AACES factor consists of 'like-dislike' or negatively interpreted items. This factor may be an artifact of the instrument and factor analysis process. A similar negative factor was identified in a different attitude item pool by Blunt (1983). The results of this study confirm that further work is needed to define the AACES' factor structure.

The EPS was subjected to a rigorous statistical analysis which demonstrated its' factor structure to be so robust that it was reproducible with almost 50% fewer items. It is recognized that the subjects in this study were not typical of all adult education participants and a similar reduction in scale items may not be achieved with other populations. Also the current study used the F form and Boshier (1991) now recommends the A form be used. While the authors think LISREL offers a future means to develop a short form of the EPS in the meantime researchers are advised not to arbitrarily reduce the length of either the F or A forms. Acceptable levels of convergent and concurrent validity were demonstrated for the EPS. However the analyses indicated that levels of discriminant validity, when motivational orientations are assessed against attitudes, are less satisfactory. It would appear that just as Houle failed to precisely distinguish between motives and attitudes, the instruments grounded in his interpretive work (Houle 1961) carry this conceptual ambiguity with them.

The predictive validity of both scales was weak and the study confirms the difficulties of finding strong empirical links between motivational orientations or attitudes and participation behavior. The findings are congruent with the view that motives and attitudes impact on the decision to participate as 'climatic' variables which influence personal, social and work environments in which adult education participation decisions are assessed in terms of goal fulfilling behaviors. Attitudes and motivational orientations remain conceptually important in the development of participation theory but their likely effects are predispositional to, rather than 'triggers' for, the decision to participate.

<sup>1</sup> An earlier study (Blunt 1990) was based on 307 subjects. The instrument and data collection procedures were unchanged during a second data collection in 1991 and 1992. The second data collection increased the number of subjects to 458, gender balance was improved by an increase in the proportion of female subjects from 36.5% (112) to 47.1% (218) and the ration of the number of respondents per scale item was improved from 4.95:1 to 7.39:1.

<sup>2</sup> The A (alternate) version of the EPS was introduced in 1991.

<sup>3</sup> RMSR is recommended for large sample sizes while GFI & AGFI are not dependent on sample size.

<sup>4</sup> Bentler and Chou (1988) and Bollen(1989) recommend a minimum of three items.

<sup>5</sup> The 2 factor solution was accepted on the basis of it being superior to the 1 & 3 factor solutions in terms of fit-indices and the developers original conceptual framework for the measurement of attitudes.

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**WORDS FROM THE EDGE:  
A POSTMODERN REFLECTION ON COOLIE VERNER  
AND THE BLACK BOOK**

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CANADA

**Abstract:** Coolie Verner was a Virginian patrician who made significant contributions to the black book. He lived on the edge of society where he yearned for love that invariably slipped away. This impeded his ability to complete projects and, for him, the black book turned into an "unmitigated disaster".

**Introduction:** The "founding fathers" of North American academic adult education are often portrayed as civil, well-meaning, cooperative folks giving birth to an emerging discipline. But, as the recent controversy over Peters and Jarvis (1991) demonstrated, things are not always as they appear to be. There are parallels between the making of the black and black-and-blue books. These days, Jensen, Liveright and Hallenbeck (1964) are acknowledged as editors of the black book but, at the time it was made, Verner was the "other" one, in more ways than one. Our purpose is to examine the making of the black book, from the perspective of Coolie Verner who, much of the time, lived in the margins. Verner was a Virginia aristocrat, motherless son, gay man, carto-bibliographer, book lover and scholar dedicated to system and order. These "positions" did not easily coexist and their various perturbations shaped his relationship to and ultimate withdrawal from the black book project. This study was generally pervaded by a reading of Foucault's "dividing" and "self-imposed othering" practices (Rabinow, 1984). Just as Oscar Wilde's art was inseparably bound to his personality (and led to humiliation and imprisonment), Verner's work, or the various personas he cultivated (e.g. curmudgeon, dandy, extortioner, renaissance man, patrician, social cartographer) cannot be separated from their discourses and history. There is also the possibility of subjecting these data to a psychoanalytic analysis, paying particular attention to Verner's childhood, the absent mother, introjection of homophobia and projection of aggression. What happened (and is still happening) to Verner should be of interest to all who value justice, diversity and the sometimes difficult search for human happiness. His academic contributions were in rural sociology, carto-bibliography and adult education. As founding chair of the CPAE and Chair of the AEA Publications Committee when the foundations of a discipline were being laid, he stimulated production of Jensen, Liveright and Hallenbeck (1964), Brunner's (1959) *Overview*, Grattan's (1955) *In Quest of Knowledge*. This writer made commitments to Verner about the care of his Reading Room. Nothing involving Verner is easy but, what follows, stems from respect and regret about what could have been. The subjectivity and positionality of the author is acknowledged and, the reading of Verner that appears here, is certainly not the last word.

**Data Source:** Our primary sources were the Verner papers at UBC, interviews (some taped, others not) with his associates, and audiotaped interviews with and personal recollections of Verner himself. Unless specified, the letters cited are from the Verner papers at UBC Special Collections.

## CHRONOLOGY OF A DIVIDED SELF

Verner spent much of his life on a precipice, without love, defending himself from homophobia. His was a life of hiding, but also posturing, recklessness and risk. He was a respected, even adored academic, but, at night and on weekends, too often filled with loneliness and grief. As a result, he took enormous personal and professional risks, was once the object of blackmail and, to paraphrase a Canadian humorist, had an uncanny knack for snatching defeat from the jaws of victory.

He was born in 1917, in Portsmouth, Ohio, the son of Alfred Miller Verner, a military officer, and by a mother whose name he didn't know (Veterans Application, 1948?). His family were old established tobacco farmers. He attended Sperryville High School in Virginia, and then the College of William and Mary, 1934 to 1937. He was back at William and Mary from 1938 until 1941 and likely seduced by a Dr. Bockers (Verner, 1979) who later took early retirement mired in controversy. In 1941-42 Verner was a social worker. He joined the army on August 24, 1942 at Camp Lee, Virginia. From here he went to the bomb disposal school in the Ordinance Department at the Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland. From 1943 to 1945 he was with the U.S. army in Europe, defusing bombs, writing pamphlets, giving classes, collecting art and dealing with the ambiguities of being gay in the military. For many gay Americans, World War II constituted something of a nationwide coming out experience (D'Emilio, 1983). But not for Verner. From 1946 to 1947 he was in Korea where he slipped and injured his back at Pusan on January 25, 1947. This landed him in the 71st Army Hospital, San Francisco with a fractured spine and later the Oliver General Hospital in Augusta, Georgia where, in addition to the spine problem, he claims to have had poliomyelitis (Veterans Application, 1948?). The army lost the records concerning his injury and this caused immense problems. In the Georgia hospital he apparently received the love he craved and, on September 10, 1947, married Virginia Day. It is hard to know why, as a gay man, he did this because they never lived together and divorced almost exactly a year later. Ms. Day was a nurse in the armed forces and Verner would claim, usually with a smirk and to disbelieving audiences, that "she took advantage of me" in the hospital (Blunt, 1995). Apart from her other qualities Verner would be attracted to her name. At the time, homosexuality was increasingly being linked to communism (Griffith, 1970). Later, to his credit, Verner (1954) attacked McCarthyism. From 1947 to 1950, he worked in the Extension Division of the University of Virginia.

**Columbia:** He obtained an M.A. in 1951 and Ed.D. in 1952 from Teachers Columbia. He was now 35 years old, spending summers at Cape Cod with Ed Brunner. His entry on the candidate's page of his placement form ("write whatever you please to serve whatever purpose you have") called for inclusion. "The barriers of institutionalism and of self interest must give way to the building of the larger more universal community in which individuals can find their maximum opportunity by insuring it for all" (Field Placement, 1952). No doubt he had society in mind, but also his own situation. He had a post-graduate year in London as Fullbright scholar, during which he had a titanic struggle with the US Army over money owed from his injury. Always the patrician, at the opening session for Fullbright scholars in London, he put a check mark next to all those with doctorates.



**Vancouver:** Verner became Professor of Adult Education at Florida State University in 1953 but, by 1959, was visiting Professor at UBC. Here he won the respect and admiration of Neville Scarfe, Dean of Education. Hallenbeck, who was visiting Professor at UBC at the time, urged Scarfe to hire Verner because, amongst other things, "he is one of the ablest of the approximately twenty professors of adult education on the American continent" (Hallenbeck to Scarfe, March 31, 1961). UBC paid part of the cost of getting Verner's large book collection to Vancouver, an ironic gesture in the light of their subsequent neglect and hostility (Boshier, 1992).

In Vancouver he registered with "have-a-gay stay", and offered hospitality to out-of-town travellers. This led to difficult relationships and "Dear Coolie" letters on the kitchen table (Verner Papers, File 2, Box 7). At the exact time the final details of the black book were being thrashed out Verner was involved in wrenching struggles involving his position in the university and the devastation of loneliness. All of this was well before Pierre Trudeau's initiatives on homosexuality. He straddled a divide, flaunting his academic credentials and demeaning others one minute, hiding morosely the next. He wanted visibility and invisibility. At times he wore bow ties, loud jackets, large amounts of jewellery. A newspaper report of an adult education meeting got it about right. Professor Verner "is a man with a crew cut, youthful smile, natty jacket (who) somehow, stood out in the throng" (*Seattle Times*, 24 September, 1959). On Oct. 30, 1965, at age 49, he began a relationship with a 21 year old, the son of a former student and relative of UBC's most important benefactor. This relationship, more than any other, was ripe with potential but drove him to despair and, in an attempt to extort affection, a fumbled suicide. According to notes and a diary ("lest we forget") left in his files (File 2, Box 7), the "first kiss" was on Feb. 13, 1966. On May 24, they were lovers "in fact as well as in spirit" (Diary, File 2, Box 7). By January, 1968 Verner was heartbroken after a succession of disappointments. "I must write this letter because I can no longer compromise my personal integrity as an intelligent human and your lover. As you should know since you know me better than anyone, I seek to be completely honest in everything and I cannot survive dishonesty in personal relationships - particularly in someone I love as much as I love you" (Verner to K, Jan. 4, 1968, File 2, Box 7). In another letter he wrote "here in the unfathomable depths of the night an indescribable loneliness creeps upon me. Out of the surrounding darkness, visions of the past haunt me with tantalizing glimpses of unforgotten moments with you. First they lighten my despair then quickly recede leaving my heart numbed with the hopelessness that only the lonely and the unloved can know. There is no escape from the pain of this vision" (File 2, Box 7).

From a Foucauldian perspective both Verner and his lover are disembodied. Names are not usually used. Letters to Verner are addressed "Dear C" or "Dear Heart". Verner's letters to K are signed "Devotedly V". Other times there is no address and no signature. The most despondent letters from Verner were drafted and redrafted, had no addressee and no signature. They were written into a black void, into nothingness, as catharsis. Later they were sent to K.

But, most disturbing, Verner felt lost love had robbed him of creativity and this impeded his ability to complete projects. "Of all these forms of loneliness and, too, those I have not named, that of the loving but unloved, is the most tragic for it is this that eats away at the will to live and destroys the creative impulses ... Without you,

my love, there is no reason to live and no promise of reward from creative activity. Creativeness must be spurred by the stimulation of love ..." (File 2, Box 7). Verner was struggling and in a letter (Feb. 15, 1968) K complained because "you keep talking about your suicide attempt." But a month later things are looking up - "congratulations on your Canada Council grant, I am very happy for you", wrote K.

The boundaries around the personal and professional had entirely collapsed. Verner referred K to Malcolm Knowles and Gale (or Glen) Jensen (Letter, K to Verner, March 18, 1968). Verner was still fooling with bombs which could have gone off at any time. For example, on Dec. 15, 1966, when he had important projects underway, someone in Winnipeg mailed him a photocopy of page 47 of the 1953-54 Canada Criminal code and threatened to expose him unless he ceased his relationships "immediately and permanently" (Verner Papers, File 2, Box 7). At that time buggery with assault incurred a whipping and ten years imprisonment; gross indecency incurred five years. He ignored the threat, later forwarding the letter to the UBC archives (File 2, Box 7). At about this time he appeared on a panel talking about poverty and oppression, with Stanley Knowles, a prominent socialist M.P.

On the night of June 27-28, 1969 police raided a gay bar at the Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village, New York. This provoked three days of rioting by gay men and lesbians and inspired the birth of "gay liberation" as an international mass movement (Summers, 1990). In Canada, the Trudeau government tried, unsuccessfully, to end the othering of homosexuals. But it was too little, too late for Verner. Whereas Oscar Wilde had turned the disaster of his imprisonment (for indecency) into an important writing project and ludic triumph, the motherless Verner incorporated society's contempt and abandoned projects at the eleventh hour.

### PUBLISHING POLITICS

The black book was a collaborative project that evolved from CPAE meetings held from 1955 until its publication in 1964. In 1955 Verner, along with 14 others, attended the inaugural meeting of the Commission of Professors at Allerton Park, Monticello, Illinois. In the foreword to Peters and Jarvis (1991) Houle (1991) recalls this as the meeting on the "fertile prairie of central Illinois ... in an imposing mansion that had become a conference center." Verner (1979), with a smirk, recalled that the Professors slept with the Catholic Bishop who had a meeting going at the same time. The transcripts of this and subsequent meetings, are fascinating reading and, as Law noted, provide a "window on the dynamics of exclusion ... the politics of graduate study, the politics of publishing" (1988, p. 59). In 1955 at Allerton Park the "Verner view" (Proceedings, 1955, p. 5) favoured "social change." At the Ann Arbor meeting of CPAE (Proceedings, 1957, p. 3) Verner was under pressure because of his apparent preoccupation with definitions. Also, when Kellogg money was obtained to further the work of the commission there was a struggle about who was permitted to attend. Page 8 of the 1957 Proceedings reports Verner being disciplined for wanting to restrict Commission membership to university professors. The "spirit" of these first CPAE meetings was Paul Essert (Columbia) who played the piano so the Professors could sing (Griffith, 1995).

At the 1958 Lafayette meeting Brunner appeared under Verner's sponsorship and outlined progress on the *Overview of Adult Education Research* (Proceedings, 1958). Verner relinquished the chair of CPAE to Kreitlow at this meeting, but continued to call for "disciplinization." In Madison (1959) he presented his conceptual scheme ("which I presume some of you have read") and again disagreed with Houle, this time over the alleged backgrounding of self-directed learning. But despite reservations about Verner, there were calls for production of a "slim volume" on basic concepts (Proceedings, 1959). The 1960 meeting in East Lansing produced a mammoth 229 pages of single-spaced typing; the outlines of what would later become the black book were quite visible.

At these meetings Verner, the motherless child, the black sheep of Virginia farmers but not a family, and firmly in the closet, would hector his colleagues by day but drown his sorrows at night. He was a curmudgeon whose bullying masked insecurity, lovelessness and anxiety. His need for structure and precision arose from a genuine desire to build a discipline but also from personal chaos and insecurity. An aficionado of maps, Verner wanted to see clearly marked roads, rivers and bridges in the "emerging discipline." Others, less bright than Verner, thought this implied closure, the lack of a "holistic" approach. In 1961, Hallenbeck tried counselling him. They had both been working on their chapters for the black book. "I haven't been able to get at rethinking my chapter .... I hope that you see yours more clearly. I did the best I could to help it along and I hope that I helped some." Then, a gentle hint, "I find as I get older that one of the most serious things that happens is that ... we set lines with all good intentions which all too soon develop into rigidities. Perhaps that has made me lean over backwards about this matter of definitions and boundaries" (Hallenbeck to Verner, April 1, 1961).

The Ann Arbor meeting (Proceedings, 1962) was almost entirely given over to producing the black book. Verner was not reassured by the capacity of his colleagues to produce. "To get things done you needed to be a black slave owner from the south ... ride over them with a black snake whip" (Verner, 1979). There would be two parts. Part 1 was the "imperatives" pamphlet; Part 2 the "black book". Draft chapters were circulated for critique, there was discussion about the listing of author's names (p. 10) but, fatally, no mention of an index or proper table of contents. At the CPAE business meeting of November 14, 1964, under item C it was reported that the "new professor's book ... is in production." "The chair was asked to send a specially bound copy to Gale Jensen" (Minutes, November 14, 1964).

Verner withdrew from the project, later claiming he didn't have the temperament to "edit other peoples crap" (Verner, 1979). In the preface Jensen (1964) noted that Verner's name "does not appear at his request" (p. xiv). Selman (1994) later called him a "prickly character ... bright, belligerent and dogmatic." Verner (1979) claims to have pleaded with Jensen to see the page proofs but it never happened. He sensed what lay ahead and, before the book went to press, removed himself from the editorial board in favour of Hallenbeck. He had an escape route organised - he would produce his own book and, to this day, Verner and Booth (1964) is a sinuous treatment of the field. In this book, as others, Verner didn't waste words.

Earlier CPAE Proceedings had been bound in blue and there had been frequent reference to the Professors "blue book." When the black one arrived Verner thought it "an unmitigated disaster ... just what we didn't need at the time ... it made us into a laughing stock in the rest of the university" (Verner, 1979). It was a dog's breakfast, no index, no proper Table of Contents, the copyright statement incorrect. Houle (1991) later opined that "it may have influenced some campus authorities to decide not to start adult education programs" (1991, p. vxi). At the time of its publication, complaints surfaced quickly and when Thiede (December 22, 1965) circulated a letter calling for remedial action, it was addressed to Verner, Knowles (now chair of the CPAE) and Jensen. The CPAE needed someone to sort out a problem, maybe an expert on bomb disposal. "Could we do a twelve page insert in which we include a paged table of contents and an index, as well as a listing of the author's and their institutional affiliations?" pleaded Thiede (Thiede to Verner, December 22, 1965). Verner was very preoccupied in Vancouver and there is no record of response to Thiede. Later he withdrew from the CPAE, only returning for one last time, at David Little's urging, for the 1978 debate in Portland (Portland Debate, 1978), a trip paid for by friends.

Despite the disappointment, Verner ordered many sets of the black book and mint copies still turn up in Vancouver second hand book stores. He claimed Jensen "never lived it down" and the entire escapade crippled the Commission (Verner, 1979). But, unlike the one to follow in 1991, the black book was the result of nine years of collaboration and conceptual struggle and, moreover, Verner (1964) wrote an important chapter. He had a leading role in the black book but lost it in the finishing straight. Years later, in an echo of earlier events, John Niemi created the momentum for the second black book but it was entrusted to others.

Verner's life ended on the west coast, at the top of a cliff, where fault lines pile into each other, far from Virginia. Even in Vancouver, squeezed between mountain and sea, and famous for its tolerance of homosexuality, but the end of the road in many ways, Verner never found the comfort he craved. His patrician roots remained. So did his concern with maps and structures. But he had been left in the lurch on too many occasions. Distant relatives tried to contact him before death. But there would be no reply, satisfaction for them. Not now. Too late. On Friday October 12, 1979, in the morning, heavy fog had descended on Georgia Strait. The house at Horton Bay was shrouded, lost at the end of the road, on the cliff edge, anonymous in haze. Fog horns moaned in the distance. At 9.15 a.m, the moment Verner died from cancer, there were no lovers, no adult educators, no map-makers, no friends, no family, only a public nurse paid to be there. Three weeks prior to death he had changed his will but, in a typical contradiction, the organ he liked to play went to the church he despised and never attended. His radiation mask was nailed to a tree, another symbol of contempt for the mainstream. Now, 15 years later, UBC has attempted to renege on an agreement to protect Verner's books (see Boshier, 1992).

The story of Verner has implications for the present, First, this account tends, in limited ways, to partly unveil some of the mystery surrounding the "founding fathers." Second, even researchers using objectivist ontologies, are, whether they like it or not, shaped by their history and taken-for-granted discourses.



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## The Imaginary Institution of Adult Education: A Reassessment of the Field's Collective Identity

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**Abstract:** This paper draws upon central concepts from the psychoanalytic tradition, and the work of several theorists working in that tradition—Copjec, Lacan, Laclau & Mouffe, Lefort, and Zizek—to explain the identity crisis confronting the institution of adult education and outline a potential course of action for adult educators.

### Introduction

Every society up to now has attempted to give an answer to a few fundamental questions: Who are we as a collectivity? What are we for one another? Where and in what are we? What do we want; what do we desire; what are we lacking? Society must define its "identity," its articulation, the world, its relations to the world and to the objects it contains, its needs and its desires. Without the "answer" to these "questions," without these "definitions," there can be no human world, no society, no culture—for everything would be an undifferentiated chaos. The role of imaginary significations is to provide an answer to these questions, an answer that, obviously, neither "reality," nor "rationality" can provide.

(Castoriadis, 1987, pp. 146–147)

Its roots firmly entrenched in the Western empirical-analytic tradition, the institution of adult education, from its very inception, has looked to the "real" and the "rational" to "define its 'identity,' its articulation, the world, its relations to the world and to the objects it contains, its needs and its desires."<sup>1</sup> Only of late has it become apparent that "obviously, neither 'reality,' nor 'rationality' can provide" such answers. In spheres long the privileged domain of the orthodoxy—adult education journals and conferences—the institution's "answers" have been subjected to increasing scrutiny by an increasingly vocal lobby of educators committed to "alternative knowledge forms" (Welton, 1991, p. 26).

Inspired by the successes of feminist initiatives in other arenas, the alternative lobby has struggled unremittingly to strip the establishment's "answers" of their essentialist guise and reveal the exclusionary interests at play behind their universalist gloss. But having shattered the ideal image that has long unified the field, the alternative lobby, no longer united by a common cause, is dissipating into a plethora of special interest groups engaged in various forms of identity politics. As a result, the institution of adult education, stripped of its defining characteristics, is undergoing an identity crisis, a crisis that some fear threatens the very being of the field. How is this strange turn of events to be understood? What sort of response does this situation demand of adult educators? This paper draws upon central concepts from the psychoanalytic tradition, and the work of several theorists working in that tradition—Copjec, Lacan, Laclau & Mouffe, Lefort, and Zizek—to explore this perplexing problem and outline a potential course of action for adult educators.

### The Nature of Identity

What is it that makes a "Canadian" distinctly different from an "American"? While members of both collectivities will protest and defend their "differences," just how

they are different is often a mystery to Canadians and Americans alike. The same is true for members of other nations. In fact, the concepts "nation, nationality, nationalism—all have proved notoriously difficult to define, let alone to analyse" (Anderson, 1991, p. 3). Such concepts, Anderson contends, are, in fact, "cultural artefacts of a particular kind"; consequently, "to understand them properly we need to consider carefully how they have come into historical being," and "in what ways their meanings have changed over time" (p. 4). Descriptors such as "nation" and "adult education," then, refer not to a set of objective or real features but imaginary relations. Why? Because adult educators, not unlike "the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (Anderson, 1991, p. 6).

However, just as the members of most nations consider themselves part of real, rather than imaginary communities, so too do adult educators. This manifests itself in terms of a desire for a concrete "identity," for a constitutive "Law," for a clearly defined object of study and a distinct body of knowledge, evidenced in statements such as: "there is an urgent need for the development of a body of research and a theory unique to adult education" (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982, p. 25). It is this perceived desire or "lack" that the institution of adult education coalesces around, taking the form a collective subject whose very being depends upon the knowledge of its own origins being hidden from itself. As with the individual subject of psychoanalysis, this collective subject exists neither prior to nor apart from its desire and is comprised of two dimensions that correspond to the conscious and unconscious aspects of the individual. Consequently, it will be useful to say a little about how the psychoanalytic tradition arrived at and explains its the notion of the decentred subject.

### **The Subject of Psychoanalysis**

Jacques Lacan, the enfant terrible of psychoanalysis, traces the emergence of the modern subject—the self-conscious monad at the very centre of the human being, the autonomous agent at the heart of the Western Humanist tradition that serves as the unshakable foundation for Truth—to 17th Century Europe, identifying its first appearance in the work of René Descartes. It was Descartes who recognized in his own process of thinking an awareness of himself, his self-consciousness. This is act involves, "over and above the registration and perception of sensations, an apperception: an act of attributing perception to an underlying perceiver" (Grosz, 1990, p. 35, emphasis added). Hence Descartes' dictum: *Cogito ergo sum*; I think, therefore, I am. It was this revelation that led Descartes to declare consciousness and subjectivity coterminous. It is exactly this notion of the unitary, centred subject that Freud's discovery of the unconscious challenges. It is Lacan, however, who rephrases the question first asked by Freud in a way that is more in keeping with theories of language that postdate Freud's own work: "Is the place that I occupy as the subject of a signifier [in Lacanese, "the enunciated subject"] concentric or eccentric, in relation to the place I occupy as subject of the signified ["the subject of enunciation"]?" (Lacan, 1977, p. 165). The meaning Lacan attributes to these terms will be discussed below.

Lacan's answer, of course, is eccentric or "decentred," since he posits a subject comprised of more than one centre. His claim is that the subject occupies different places or locations: one the centre of conscious discourse—of "signifiers"—the other of unconscious discourse governed by "signifying mechanisms" that shape the "signified" and can, therefore, be designated legitimately as thought. It is Lacan's

contention that this bipolarity demands a reformulation of Descartes' Cogito: "I think [on an unconscious level, at the level of the "signified"] where I am not [that is, on a conscious level, at the level of the "signifier"], therefore I am where I do not think" (Lacan, 1977, p. 166). What Descartes fails to recognize, according to Lacan, is that the concept, "subject," is comprised of two elements, elements that correspond to Ferdinand de Saussure's (1983) "signifier" and "signified—to the word used to represent or signify a thought, "apple," for instance, and the thought object " " itself. The "subject of the signifier" is the subject of consciousness—that which is enunciated—the "subject of the signified" is the subject of the unconscious—that which structures enunciation. This bifurcation, Lacan contends, is the condition for the possibility of the subject coming into being, for its ability to "unknowingly" represent its own desire to itself. As Slavoj Žižek (1991, p. 68) notes: "the Lacanian notion of the imaginary [enunciated] self... exists only on the basis of the misrecognition of its own conditions; it is the effect of this misrecognition." It is not, however, the supposed inability of this self to reflect that Lacan focusses on, "on its being the plaything of inaccessible unconscious forces; his point is that the subject can pay for such reflection with the loss of his [or her] ontological consistency." Misunderstandings of Lacan's position are legend, and some suggest quite explicable.<sup>2</sup> It is a failure to grasp his distinction between the two subject positions—between "the enunciated subject" and "the subject of enunciation"—that is often the source of much confusion, however. It is useful to bear in mind, therefore, that if the unconscious is the locus of thought—the subject of enunciation—and the conscious subject, or imaginary ego, is the locus of language—the enunciated subject—an irremediable gap between what is meant and what is said is apparent. The result, according to Lacan, is that "the implications of meaning infinitely exceed the signs manipulated by the individual...; as far as signs are concerned, man is always mobilizing many more of them than he knows" (Lacan, in Felman, 1987, p. 77). The unconscious, the subject of enunciation, is a site of unmeant knowledge that escapes intentionality and meaning, appearing to the conscious subject only in the form of verbal slips and dream images—it is a speaking knowledge that is denied to the speaker's knowledge. The unconscious "is knowledge that can't tolerate one's knowing that one knows," and "analysis appears on the scene to announce that there is knowledge that does not know itself, knowledge that is supported by the signifier as such" (in Felman, 1987, p. 77). The point that should not be missed here is that the very condition for the possibility of conscious knowledge is the active repression of some other knowledge on an unconscious level.<sup>3</sup> Ignorance is not the absence of knowledge but the negative condition for the possibility of any positive knowledge: the gap between knowing and not knowing, consequently, can never be closed. As Felman (1987) notes:

there can be no such thing as absolute knowledge: absolute knowledge is knowledge that has exhausted its own articulation, but articulated knowledge is by definition what cannot exhaust its own self-knowledge. For knowledge to be spoken, linguistically articulated, it would constitutively have to be supported by the ignorance carried by language, the ignorance of the excess of signs that of necessity its language—its articulation—"mobilizes." (Felman, 1987, pp. 77–78)



### **The Collective Subject**

If we now return to the collective subject that emerges with the institution of adult education, we see that it is in repressing its knowledge of its origins in one place that this collective subject is able to represent to itself in another the object of its desire: an objective set of defining features. But what are these two levels that correspond to the individual subject's conscious and unconscious dimensions? The first, according to Claude Lefort, is the "Social": it corresponds to the conscious subject, the subject of the signifier, the enunciated subject, the imaginary ego. The second is the "Political": it corresponds to the unconscious subject, the subject of enunciation, the subject of the signified, the ego ideal. The institution of adult education entails, then, the coming into being of a split collective subject that must repress all knowledge of its origins in its Social dimension, in order that its other dimension—the Political—may appear there as the representation/ideal image of its own desire: an objective set of defining features—the Law. The Lacanian notion of Law at play here is enabling, rather than prohibitory, being "conceived as an agency of 'disalienation' and 'liberation': it opens up our access to desire by enabling us to disengage ourselves from the rule of the Other's whim" (Žizek, 1994, p. 265). Under the Law, the emergence of "adult education" as a Law-governed practice allows adult educators to distinguish themselves from the "Other," to identify with one another and see themselves as distinct from all other fields of educational endeavour. However, for those who comprise the institution's Social dimension—"adult educators"—to be able to recognize themselves in its Political representation/ideal image—"adult education"—this ideal signifier must appear greater than and different from those signifiers whose identity it must sustain—as a Law. While adult educators identify with this ideal image in many different ways—through signifiers such as "essentialism," "perennialism," "progressivism," "reconstructionism," "existentialism," "liberal education," "humanistic education," "behaviorism," "radicalism," "philosophical analysis," etc. (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982, p. 43)—the term/image "adult education" must serve to sustain the identity of this wide range of practices above and beyond all their variations. This raises the question of the exact nature of the "Essence," the "Meaning," the Signified of "adult education" that all these various signifiers identify themselves with.

### **The Quilting Point**

That this Master Signified to which all the various signifiers refer can somehow be cashed-out in terms of a set of objective features—the one-and-only, True definition—is the largely unquestioned belief of the field. In fact, this "multitude of 'floating signifiers'... is structured into a unified field through the intervention of a certain 'nodal point' (the Lacanian point de capiton) which 'quilts' them, stops their sliding and fixes their meaning" (Žizek, 1991, p. 87). It is the Political ideal image, the signifier "adult education" that serves as this "nodal point." It may be easier to grasp this process of "quilting" if we take the term "radical democracy" as a corollary of "adult education" and observe how this signifier, this ideal image, serves to "quilt," to sustain the identity of diverse fields of political endeavour, in the work of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985). Slavoj Žizek (1991) offers the following account of this process at play:

Let us take the Laclau/Mouffe project of radical democracy: here, we have an articulation of particular struggles (for peace, ecology, feminism, human rights, and so on), none of which pretends to the "Truth," the last Signified, the "true

Meaning" of all the others; but the title "radical democracy" itself indicates how the very possibility of their articulation implies the "nodal," determining role of a certain struggle which, precisely as a particular struggle, outlines the horizon of all the other struggles. This determining role belongs, of course, to democracy, to "democratic invention": according to Laclau and Mouffe, all other struggles (socialist, feminist...) could be conceived as the gradual radicalization, extension, application of the democratic project to new domains (of economic relations, of the relations between sexes...). The dialectical paradox lies in the fact that the particular struggle playing a hegemonic role, far from enforcing a violent suppression of the differences, opens the very space for the relative autonomy of the particular struggles: the feminist struggle, for example, is made possible only through reference to democratic-egalitarian political discourse. (Žizek, 1991, pp. 88–89)

In the case of adult education, "the dialectical paradox lies in the fact that the particular struggle playing a hegemonic role [that of the orthodoxy], far from enforcing a violent suppression of the differences, opens the very space for the relative autonomy of the particular [feminist, class, race, gender...] struggles." The irony in the current situation, then, is that the alternative lobby, in struggling to shatter the orthodoxy's image of adult education, threatens to destroy that which "opens the very space for the particular struggles" that constitute the alternative lobby. This strange turn of events has arisen in adult education, and arises in other institutions, when those who come to embody the institution's Political mandate, whether in a democratic or a totalitarian manner, declare this Law, as they are inevitably inclined to do, greater than, separate from, and independent of the Social.

### **The Problem of the Political**

Of course, divorcing the Political from the Social generates legitimation problems. In the name of what, for instance, might the will of the Law be imposed—the Good of the many, individual freedom, Truth? If the Political, on the one hand, simply imposes its will, the Social will inevitably revolt, but if the Political, on the other, is reduced to the Social, it can no longer serve as the Law of the institution. The dilemma of the Political is one all institutions must contend with: the institution, in the act of distinguishing itself from Other fields of endeavour, comes into being only through its Political self-representation. In whatever form the Political is represented, the problem remains the same: the Law must be abiding, yet open to change; legislators are necessarily of the Social, yet must determine the Law for All; movements within the Social, whether of a social or political nature, represent particular interests within the Social, but must do so in the name of the Whole institution. The expectation is for the Political to be within the Social and concerned with the particular on the one hand, yet without and concerned with the Universal, on the other (Howard, 1977). The question remains, however, of what courses of action are open to adult educators, given the above and the institution of adult education's current predicament.

### **Choosing a Course of Action**

The issue of concern to adult educators here, is clearly one of power: in the name of what is power to be exercised, and on whom and by whom? Lefort maintains that while power must be represented, it is not something that one can, nor should try to, determine empirically: it is a derivative of *l'imaginaire*, the Imaginary, whose "function is to neutralize the conflictual origins of the social, to create the illusion of permanence and necessity" (Howard, 1977, p. 256). The function of the Imaginary,

then, is to diffuse the potential arising from the division inherent in the institution, and it is in situations where Power is separated absolutely from the Social, usually through some form of transcendental legitimation, that institutions are most stable. The price of such stability, however, is the blind imposition of Law on the Social. But Lefort contends that if lived experience is ever reduced to, that is, explained and determined in terms of, either the Political or the Social, the institution is being governed ideologically. For Lefort, "ideology is articulated in the attempt to re-create the... [institution] without history. The neglect of origins, the denial of the division, and the pretence of rendering the social space self-transparent are its characteristics" (Howard, 1977, p. 256). For Lefort, then, any attempt to situate and occupy Power in either the Political or Social is ideological: to attempt to do so in the Political is to identify oneself as an expert/leader; to attempt to do so in the Social is to identify oneself as an activist/militant. If we consider the courses of action open to adult educators in this light, it should be possible to identify which are ideological attempts to situate and occupy Power in either the Political or Social.

### **Leader, Militant, or Adult Educator?**

The first course of action open to adult educators is to identify with the orthodoxy, to assume the mandate of expert/leader. This would be to situate Power in the Political and divorce the Political from the Social by legitimating Power in terms of the "scientism" of the Western empirical-analytic tradition. While this would undoubtedly provide the institution with a greater measure of stability, it is an ideological course of action because it reduces lived experience to the Political and attempts to "bridge" the gap between the Political and the Social and in so doing diffuses the creative potential between the two poles.

The second course of action open to adult educators is to identify with the alternative lobby, to assume the mandate of the activist/militant. This would be to situate Power in the Social and reduce the Political to the Social, making it impossible to legitimate the Law in terms of something that appears greater than and different from the Social. This would further destabilize the institution by reducing lived experience to the Social. This course of action too, then, is ideological because it tries to "mask" the difference between the Political and the Social and in so doing, it too diffuses the creative tension generated between these twin poles.

According to Lefort, the only non-ideological course open to the adult educator is to pursue a theory of the institution that she or he knows can only be philosophical. To think one can do more is self-deluding and dangerous. A theory that ignores its own limits inevitably falls prey to ideology of one variety or the other. The task, according to Lefort, is to participate from "one's own place: one analyses, writes, talks. No more can be done.... To want to be the leader, or to think of oneself as the militant, is to be open to contradiction in one's own attitudes and from the social reality itself" (Howard, 1977, p. 260). The challenge lies in resisting the temptation to diffuse the creative tension between the poles of the Political and Social by attempting either to dispel or ignore the difference between the two poles, in pursuing a philosophy.<sup>4</sup>

Is Lefort's vision, while clearly more elaborate, really so very different from what pioneers in the field of adult education such as Corbett, Kidd, and Lindeman envisaged for adult educators over fifty years ago? Their belief was that adult educators should be schooled not only in the sciences but also in cultural history, that they should be able to understand the work experience of their students and navigate their way through different streams of knowledge. Specialization in any one domain of knowledge was frowned upon, while a liberal grasp of a wide range of subject areas

and interpretive frameworks was encouraged. Envisaged not so much as a process of acquiring the tools of learning, as a way of learning the relation between knowledge and living, the aim of adult education was to serve individual and group adjustment by drawing upon the situations and experiences that mold adult life. It is was to be a process, a philosophy, whereby adult educators, freed from traditional bonds, could learn to navigate between the twin perils of Scylla and Charybdis—the Political and the Social—and dismiss any urge to diffuse the creative potential between these two poles as misguided and ideological.

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<sup>1</sup> See Briton and Plumb (1993) for one account of the factors that contributed to the establishment of an adult education orthodoxy.

<sup>2</sup> Metz (1982, p. 223), for instance, suggests that Lacan's *"Ecrits"* make no claim to didactic clarity, at least in the ordinary sense (because I think they possess another kind of clarity, profoundly didactic in its own way: blindingly so, to the point that the reader represses it and makes enormous efforts not to understand)."

<sup>3</sup> It is for this reason that Foucault's notion of the subject, a notion embraced by some members of the alternative lobby to undermine the orthodoxy, must be dismissed as flawed. According to Foucault—most clearly in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*—the subject is totally determined by the apparatuses of Power. That is, the only knowledge the subject has is that which the apparatus instills in her or him. This overlooks the fact that the subject can have knowledge *only* on condition that some other knowledge—the conditions for the possibility of its existence—remains hidden in the subject. The subject, then, can never be totally determined by, transparent to, the apparatuses of Power, as is confirmed by the ongoing resistance of subjects to the System, despite the best efforts of the mechanisms of Power to quell such efforts. See Copjec (1989) for a closer analysis of this issue.

<sup>4</sup> As Howard (1977, p. 9) notes: for Lefort, "the task of philosophy (or theory) becomes an eminently moral one, social and engaged, which consists in uncovering the moments of praxis within a given social and historical structure." Consequently, this notion of philosophy must be distinguished from that of the Western empirical-analytic tradition: *theoria*—the pursuit of timeless, placeless Truths.

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## **Storming the Citadel: Engaging Adult Educators in the Critical Analysis of Adult Educational Theory**

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Despite numerous injunctions and exhortations by adult educators about the value of doing a critical analysis of professional literature, very few suggestions are available on how this might be done. In this paper I want to build on my own experience structuring a critical reading of theory around four general categories of questions (epistemological, experiential, communicative and political). Asking a series of questions about a text provides a structure for critical inquiry that makes this activity seem less daunting. The reader has a road map to take her into unfamiliar terrain.

### **Asking Epistemological Questions**

Epistemological questions inquire into what writers regard as acceptable grounds for truth and what it means for them to say that they know something. Specific epistemological questions a practitioner can ask about a piece of educational literature are the following:

1. *Are the ideas presented by writers already predetermined by the intellectual paradigm in which they work ?*
2. *To what extent are the central insights of a piece of literature - whether these are framed as research findings, theoretical propositions or philosophical injunctions - grounded in documented evidence ?*

By evidence I don't mean only quantitative or experimental studies conducted according to classical canons of scientific procedure. Personal experience is wholly valid empirical evidence, provided that it is rendered as fully as possible and that the context for the experience is made clear so that readers have a chance to check for possible distortion. So asking 'what evidence is provided for these claims?' does not exclude a whole genre of experientially or polemically inclined writing. Instead, it helps us approach such writing critically so we can distinguish between generic and idiosyncratic elements of the experiences discussed.

3. *To What Extent Does the Writing Seem Culturally Skewed ?*

Every time we come across a generic use of terms like 'adult students', 'adult learning', and 'adult education', we can get into the profitable habit of asking what specific kinds of students, learning and educational processes are being discussed. Do these students come from a variety of cultures and classes ? Is attention given to feminist ways of knowing that emphasize interdependence and connectedness, as well to the development of independent critical thought ? Is there an unacknowledged hierarchy of learning, with formal logical analysis being valued over everyday cognition? Is intellectual process being valued over practical expertise? Are holistic

and intuitive models of learning treated with the same credibility as those dealing with logical cognition?

4. *To What Extent is Descriptive and Prescriptive Writing Fused in an Irresponsible and Inaccurate Way ?*

### **Asking Experiential Questions**

Experiential questions help us to view written depictions of teaching and learning through the lenses of our own experiences. Asking these questions helps us to demystify academic texts and to bring them closer to home. When we ask these kinds of questions outlined we become much less willing to "give away" our histories by assuming that if our practice and beliefs contradict what texts say is good teaching then they we must be wrong.

1. *How Do the Metaphors for Teaching Used in a Piece of Educational Literature Compare to the Metaphors You Use to Describe Your Own Experience of Practice ?*

Hunting for the most common metaphors in a piece of academic prose is a useful way to discover the central ideas buried in an academic text. When we discover the key, repeated metaphors that appear in a piece of writing we can analyse them from several perspectives. Are these metaphors ones which embody fluid processes, or are they essentially static? What are their intellectual origins ? Do they spring from engineering systems of thought, from the natural biological world, or from artistic images ? Do they have embedded within them clear power differentials in terms of students and teachers' roles and obligations? Do they contain the implication that teaching, or learning, is predictable and can lead to a predefined conclusion ? Or, do they suggest that these processes are inchoate and open ? What are the kinds of metaphors most frequently invoked ? Are they military and sporting metaphors with teachers described as coaches and intensive courses referred to an intellectual boot camps ? What about the prevalence of capitalist metaphors that see educational processes and market values as interchangeable ? Is skill development the same as tooling ? Do students have to buy into or own an idea ?

2. *What Experiential Omissions Are There In A Piece of Literature That, To You, Seem Important ?*

As practitioners read a piece of academic literature they can keep asking questions like "Are my most common experiences contained in here?", "Are the writer's problems my problems?" and "What help are these words to my efforts to deal with the things in my teaching that keep me awake at night"? Educational writing should not deal only with educators' experiences. But if a writer's theoretical insights are shown to be grounded in, or connected to, the things that keep us awake at night, you can bet we will read it.

3. *To What Extent Does A Piece of Literature Acknowledge and Address Ethical Issues in Teaching ?*

Given that we live on the horns of impossibly complex ethical dilemmas every day of our lives, one of the first reality checks we can apply to a piece of adult educational writing is the extent to which it addresses ethical issues. Is there a chapter or section devoted to these? If not, are they discussed throughout the narrative? Which of the ethical dilemmas posed do we recognize as our own? When we do find one, is the dilemma framed convincingly with all the contradictions and cul de sacs we experience. Or, is it staged to lead to a conclusion that we realise confirms the author's prejudices? To what extent does the writing make us aware of dilemmas we had previously ignored? And, more practically, do we gain any insight into our own actions as we try to work through the dilemmas discussed?

### **Asking Communicative Questions**

Communicative questions focus on matters of form, style and presentation, so they may appear to be apolitical, superficial even. Yet, these matters are strongly political. Who decides on what are the acceptable forms of academic language that are allowed to appear in scholarly journals and textbooks? How are decisions made that certain expressive styles - such as colloquial language - go against the 'house' policy of a publisher, and therefore should not be allowed? Why are some journals off limits for qualitatively inclined researchers whose mode of presenting research is seen as too sloppy, subjective, or costly (one graph or statistical table is cheaper than a thousand quotes)? Communicative questions asked of texts help us to be aware of issues of power and control in educational writing.

#### *1. Whose Voices Are Heard In A Piece Of Academic Writing?*

As we read educational literature we can ask ourselves whose voices are heard and whose are silent. If we are reading a research report on learning we can judge the extent to which learners' own voices are evident. Is there sufficient quotational data - descriptions of learning given in learners' own words - to support and amplify the theories, models and concepts advanced? Does the author use a detached, distanced, third person style referring to 'the researcher' or 'this writer' in an objectified way? Or, does she write in the first person and acknowledge the centrality of her experiences and personality to the report? Are the findings presented in a formal, stilted, memorandum style with no sense of the hesitations, leaps forward, feelings of depression, or intuitive insights that accompanied the writer's efforts?

If axiomatic concepts are advanced (critical thinking, self-directed learning, reflective practice, and so on) are these grounded in people's own words or expressed by the writer in such a way that they would not be recognized by the people from whose experiences they sprang? Is there an explicit attempt to include a range of voices, and a variety of expressive forms (poetry, fantasy, overtly colloquial language)? Does the terminology employed reflect one class or cultural linguistic code, or are there variants by ethnicity, gender and cultural location?

#### *2. To What Extent Does The Literature Use A Form Of Specialized Language That Is Unjustifiably Distanced From The Colloquial Language Of Learners And Teachers?*

In the literature of adult education, as in most other forms of academic writing, a specialized form of discourse often develops. At times this rarefied language is necessary to capture the distinctive processes that are too complex to express in colloquial terms. At other times, however, writers throw around terms that are understood easily only by an 'in' group of academic researchers. So, when specialized language is used in literature we can ask ourselves whether or not we feel this is justified because it promotes clarity of understanding, or whether it is simply a kind of coded, scriptural signalling. When we encounter such language we can check whether or not the writer provides an abundance of examples, analogies and metaphors to help our understanding. We can get in the habit of checking whether or not a clear definition of a new term is given every time one is introduced. When generalized definitions are offered we can check whether or not we can find in our experiences examples of the processes that these definitions represent.

### **Asking Political Questions**

We raise political questions about a text whenever we ask whose interests a piece of work serves and how it stifles or animates efforts to create a more compassionate and just society. To educators who see themselves as value free expositors of objective knowledge - whether this be about history or mathematics, biology or philosophy - political questions are largely irrelevant. Indeed, at a time when political correctness is used as a term of abuse, advocating a political approach to reading adult educational literature is full of pitfalls. However, most practitioners are ready to admit that in constructing curricula or in deciding how to evaluate students they exercise choices from a range of alternative options. Having admitted this, those educators usually acknowledge that there are some values and preferences that underlie their choices. Making those values and preferences clear, investigating their origins, and asking whose interests they serve and preserve, are the purposes of political questions.

#### *1. Whose Interests Are Served By A Piece Of Literature ?*

We can discover whose interests are served by the appearance of a piece of educational literature by asking several questions of it. Is the text written to increase students' sense of democratic agency ? Does a foundation sponsor the research and, if so, how does the foundation's ideology manifest itself in the author's words ? Are the texts' images of institutions, teachers, students and the learning process ones that reinforce conformist, conservative notions of education, or ones that emphasize its activist role? We can also inquire about authors' intended audiences. Are they writing primarily for themselves (so that they can understand phenomena through the act of writing), for a group of interested colleagues (whose reactions also help them come to insight) or for as yet unknown members of future tenure committees?

#### *2. To What Extent Are Models of Pedagogy Reified ?*

Whenever we come across models for successful practice we can ask how far they promote the epistemic distortion that holds that someone, somewhere, has an



approach that works successfully, in exactly the same way, across all cultures and contexts. Rushing to embrace decontextualized packages dampens educators' sense of agency. It removes their inclination to make their own futures in an ambiguous, morally flawed world, and replaces it with a quest for a reified, omniscient, pedagogic savior. This is devastating for the development of democratic action or an engagement in critical conversation. Any text that emphasizes the importance of teachers' existential choices in the construction of their work is, in a sense, a political text.

### *3. To What Extent Do Texts Present Teaching As An Individual Act ?*

An appreciation of collectivist thinking is crucial to teachers' survival. Collectivist thinking involves recognizing that individual and collective advancement and change are inseparable. It recognizes that what are perceived as individual problems are usually structurally caused and therefore only addressed by collective action. As we read professional literature we can look at whether the images of educational process provided are individualistic or collectivist. Are models of learning and teaching placed squarely in a social or political context so that educational practice is seen as culturally constructed and transmitted? To what extent is professional autonomy elevated as a primary goal of teaching ? Do the metaphors, cliches and analogies used to describe teaching bolster the idea of teachers as rulers, behind locked doors, of the classroom domains they survey? Are the disciplinary and political divisions between educators and educators, and educators and students, presented as the natural order of things? Or, is there a recognition that compartmentalizing disciplines and segregating practitioners as workers in individual pockets of production, represents an importation of factory modes of organization into the educational arena?

When we look at writing on evaluation we can inquire as to how far models and techniques of evaluation focus on the individual practitioner and on individual practices. Is practitioner excellence defined in terms of individual content expertise and methodological fluidity ? Or, is the ability to cooperate with, and support, colleagues equally valued ? Do evaluation protocols include peer collaboration as an item or cluster of items ? Is collaboration with colleagues a central component in performance appraisal documents? Does an engagement in mentoring appear as an important criterion by which to judge practitioners' efforts?

### *4. What Contribution Does A Piece Of Writing Make To The Understanding And Realization Of Democratic Forms And Processes ?*

As we read this literature we can also ask that it help us think through some of the tactical struggles we are bound to face as critical educators. Does the writing contains advice on how to survive as a change agent in hostile territory ? Do we learn from the literature how to research an organizational culture so that any action we take has the greatest possible effect with the least possible personal harm ? Are typical risks and dangers of critically reflective practice (burn out, cultural suicide, martyrdom, isolation, professional exclusion) laid out clearly ? Does the literature explain how we might turn an organization's language and symbols back on itself so that we can justify what we are trying to do in unimpeachable terms ? Do we read



about how to recognize the most fruitful pressure points for change? Is the importance of accruing institutional credibility prior to pressing for radical change acknowledged? Can we find recognizable simulations and case studies of critical practice that help us anticipate, weigh, and plan for the consequences and risks involved?

## **The Myth of Self-directed Work Teams And The Ineffectiveness of Team Effectiveness Training: An Argument With Special Reference To Teams That Produce Knowledge**

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*The purpose of this paper is to argue that the notion of self-directed teams is a myth that is part of the dominant cultural pattern of competitive individualism in the United States. I additionally argue that the failure of many teams to achieve their objectives is wrongly addressed by teambuilding interventions. Focusing on knowledge producing teams in particular and drawing on research data, I will argue that team boundaries are so permeable and team membership so fluid that teams cannot help but reproduce the culture of the parent organization which in turn reproduces the dominant cultural patterns within the United States. The most important of these patterns as it effects teamwork is competitive individualism. Team-building interventions which wrongly problematize team members focus on personal awareness and group interaction skills while ignoring the organizational context which not only directs team task and implementation, but reproduces competitive individualism among team members. Although these interventions may temporarily introduce countercultural behavior such as trust among team members and promote the illusion of team goals, they do not address the influence of the dominant culture of the parent organization on team functioning.*

### **Team Learning**

***The team learning process is one of working with information.***

Recent grounded theory research has suggested that team learning can be functionally defined in terms of the knowledge production process: the gathering, sharing, and recombining of information, and its dissemination as new knowledge (Brooks, 1994). Similarly, from the field of psychology, Larson and Christensen (1993) define social cognition as social processes that relate to the acquisition, storage, transmission, manipulation, and use of information for the purpose of creating a group-level intellectual product. Although increasing numbers of Americans work with knowledge and knowledge appears to benefit from multiple contributors, very little research has been done on the process of group knowledge production. The few existing studies indicate that team learning includes many of the same processes individual learners use (Dechant, Marsick, & Kasl, 1993), information transfer is important (Ancona & Caldwell, 1990; Allen, 1984; Kraut, Egido and Galegher, 1990; Pelz & Andrews, 1966; Cicourel, 1987, 1990; Austin & Baldwin, 1991) and that an open and interactive climate seems essential to the process (Cicourel, 1990).

***Power inequalities negatively influence the process of dealing with information.***

Most recently, Brooks (1994) has suggested that formal and informal power inequalities among team members negatively influence the knowledge production process by limiting the participation of those with limited power (Brooks, 1994). This study of four teams in a research and development lab suggested that patterns in the organization's culture made it difficult for team members to gather, share, and work with information, and to disseminate new knowledge to others in the organization. In essence, contrary to the belief imbedded in the use of teams as a structural way to transform organizations so that they are flatter and more participative, the teams in this study reproduced the formal and informal hierarchical structure and culture of the traditional organization. Engineers dominated the knowledge production process on the teams, as did white men. Non-professional and non-management workers participated comparatively less. Engineers served as the team leaders and dominated discourse on all four teams. These power inequalities appear to reproduce the hierarchical structure present in the parent organization and characteristic of the U.S. cultural patterns of competitive individualism and scientific rationalism.

### **Self-Directed Teams And Team Effectiveness Training**

***The notion of self-directedness is based on the belief that teams constitute discrete and unitary identities. They do not. Instead their boundaries are permeable, their membership fluid, and their culture a reproduction of the parent organization.***

An important, but faulty assumption supporting the notion of self-directed teams is that teams have unitary and distinct identities and clear boundaries separating them from their environments. However, a close look at the teams I studied showed team members joining and dropping out on a regular basis; a lack of clarity about the purpose of the team; a lessening of team identity outside of the team meetings; and outside events profoundly influencing both the teams' purposes how team members interact with each other. This suggests that teams are so integrated with their organizational context, they inevitably reflect the culture and structure of that organization. If the organization is predominantly hierarchical, teams reproduce that hierarchy. If the organization excludes members of certain groups from full participation, the teams reproduce that behavior. This is not to preclude the resistance of certain individuals and groups to aspects of the predominant culture. However, it is to say that teams are so enveloped and colonized by the culture of the parent organization that they are incapable, except by an act of resistance, of doing anything but reproducing the culture of the organization. It is also to say that the type of education implicit in team training does not provide appropriate and useful tools to resist that culture. Teams, although part of the picture of what a transformed organization might look like, cannot within the current structure and culture of most organizations act counterculturally. They cannot be used to spearhead a transformational effort in organizations.

***Team training assumes that the difficulties teams have in the U.S. are the result of team member skill deficits. This oversimplifies the complexity of teamwork in specific organizational contexts.***

Prevalent in the practice and research literature about teams is the belief that team performance improves when the team competency of individual team members improves. An enormous body of research, literature, training packages and

consultancies is part of a team-building industry based on this assumption. However, this view of teams problematizes team members. This problematizing is similar to the deficit model in public education that identifies certain individuals as "at risk" and then sets them aside for special treatment intended to "fix" them so as to have a better chance of success in the current public school system. This approach is based on the notion that a single definition exists for success and that all people, in order to be successful, need to conform to a specific set of standards. In the workplace, this approach fails to place value on individual talents that fall outside of the standard definition of qualities associated with success. In the Brooks study of four research and development teams, the most productive team in terms of both technical and social knowledge had had no team training as a group and was notable for its lack of traditional team skills (1994). The team included no managers or engineers and only the leader had any college education at all. It included a preponderance of shift workers. What did seem to distinguish the team was that team members believed that the work they were doing together was going to make an important contribution to the organization.

***Teams are assumed to have a clear ideological mandate within organizations. They do not. Rather, organizations are a site of competing discourses and conflicting practices regarding teamwork.***

It is through an understanding of teams from a cultural perspective that we can begin to understand the contradictions and paradoxes teams and team members encounter working in many of today's organizations. One can understand organizations as a panoply of competing discourses, many embodied in current buzzwords in management literature and providing the marketing edge for management training seminars. For example, today's managers are being taught to work on teams - a collective activity - while at the same time learning to manage their own careers - an individualistic activity. More subtly, there is the official discourse which eulogizes the pursuit of quality through teamwork, while the behavioral text of who gets promoted is often one of membership in an old boy network. The discourse of managing one's own career disguises the more terrifying discourse euphemistically called "downsizing" or "reengineering," but understood by all as layoffs and firings. Finally, there is the attempt to integrate reengineering with its radical elimination of nonproductive units with the quality-oriented and frequently time demanding efforts of teams working within the discourse of Total Quality Management.

These discourses often seem to contradict each other and to demand conflicting behaviors from the same employee. They are the product of a proliferating industry of management consultants and literature whose fundamental premise is that organizational culture can be controlled and changed through the use by managers of appropriate and effective change methodologies. These methodologies range from radical high control methodologies such as re-engineering reflecting cultural patterns of competitive individualism and scientific rationalism, to more participative methodologies such as Total Quality Management that take a more consciously countercultural position by stressing incremental quality improvement by those individuals closest to the work being done. Regardless, the resulting and often competing discourses, each making a claim to radically transform the way things are done in the organization, drown out the traditional cultural patterns with a cultural confusion that leaves employees afraid and cynical about the organization. Particularly contradictory for teams are the discourses and organizational structures

and policies about competitive individualism versus cooperation, short-term financial returns versus quality improvement, and control and accountability versus participation and risktaking.

### **The Problem For Knowledge Producing Teams**

***For teams that produce knowledge these conflicts are further complicated by an outmoded view of knowledge which oversimplifies the interrelationship between technical and social knowledge.***

While all teams work within the kinds of paradoxes noted above, teams with the explicit purpose of producing knowledge struggle with a set of paradoxes best expressed in the following description of the modernist - post modernist controversy over the nature of knowledge:

"The modernist belief is that knowledge can be scientifically studied and analyzed. The use of objective evidence forms the foundation for what modernists accept or reject. The postmodern world, however, is one that rejects the positivist definition of "objectivity" or that one singular "truth" exists that awaits to be discovered. Rather than a Durkheimian concept of reality that synthesizes knowledge and people to abstract norms, postmodernists focus on difference and conflict where competing interpretations of reality are inevitable. Thus, the researcher's task is not to discover the "true" interpretation, for none exists; instead the challenge is to uncover the multiple voices at work in society that have been silenced" (Tiemey, 1994, 99).

In other words, postmodernism challenges the existence of an objective technical knowledge. Such a challenge should cause companies that base their success on the continual development of new technical knowledge to sit up and take notice. What would be the implications if the boundaries between technical and social knowledge were blurred?

***Intel's experience with producing and marketing the Pentium chip provides an example of how technical and social knowledge are interwoven.***

The case of Intel's recent difficulty with the Pentium chip provides an example of how technical and social knowledge are interwoven in ways that profoundly affect the company's financial success. An analysis in the December 17, 1994 Economist stated that the problem with the Pentium chip was not one of faulty engineering (the level of mathematical error in the chip was acceptable for the purposes of most PC users), but of a marketing campaign. Intel spent \$150 million on what the Economist described as

"two ambitious leaps in marketing, both unprecedented in an industry where chips were considered to be components whose make was of interest to manufacturers, not customers. First, it advertised its own name, with the ubiquitous "Intel Inside" campaign. Then, it went a step further and launched an \$80 million campaign to promote the Pentium itself, hoping to speed the market's acceptance of the new chip. It was largely thanks to this campaign that the Pentium's flaws became newsworthy" (p65).

Ironically, the fault with the Pentium was apparently not significant and was quickly repaired. Intel estimated that a single user would stumble across two numbers that cause the division problem only once every 27,000 years. However, IBM argues that some users might encounter an error once a month and announced



it would halt shipments of Pentium PCs. Other computer manufacturers, such as Dell, continue to sell Pentium-PCs on the grounds that as Intel claims, this is not a problem the average computer user needs to worry about. The Economist analysis continues:

"Rather than dismiss the Pentium problem as unimportant to most users, Intel should have promptly released a cure, either a software program that would work around the problem or a more generous recall programme (currently, the company will replace a chip only if you claim loudly that you are at risk of being affected by the error). It should also have been less hyperbolic in trying to diminish the problem's significance; regardless of which is right, once every 27,000 years sounds unconvincing next to IBM's estimates of monthly troubles. And all these questions still lead back to the broader issue: should Intel have hyped its brand to the consumer at all?"

***Although little discussion appears to be occurring in organizations themselves about the nature of knowledge the Pentium case exemplifies how knowledge can no longer be thought of as a single technical narrative, but a site of competing interpretations of technical reality interwoven with social reality***

Thus, whether or not a chip can be considered "acceptable" is not just a technical question, but a social one, as well. If Intel had not hyped its brand to the consumer, a slightly flawed chip would have been acceptable, as Dell concluded. When we begin to consider the exigencies of context, we have entered the realm of social knowledge. Thus, in this example, technical knowledge is intimately married to social knowledge and as interpretive social science has taught us, social knowledge is open to interpretation. In a postmodern era, the possibilities for different interpretations are multiple, and each of these interpretations reflects the positioning of the interpreter. Unfortunately, we have become accustomed to searching for and accepting a single grand truth and uncomfortable with the possibility of a more complex, unpredictable and multifaceted reality. When a single grand truth is allowed to dominate, it is the interpretation of the person or group who command the most formal and informal power. In other words, a single grand truth inadequately represents reality and when one truth prevails in public, it is usually the truth as seen by those who command the most formal and informal power. Although a single interpretation is allowed to dominate as truth, other interpretations do not just disappear, but remain silent, acting as sources of alienation for those who were not heard. This is a serious problem in terms of team effectiveness, and in terms of knowledge production, valuable information is lost to the process.

## **Discussion And Implications For A Knowledge And Information Society**

***Knowledge production benefits from a rich exchange of information and interpretation.***

Teams that produce knowledge, even technical knowledge, are seriously disadvantaged when the knowledge production process is an exclusive one. In particular, hierarchical organizations are disadvantaged when the perspectives of those with low formal or informal power are excluded from the conversation. In hierarchical organizations in which the dominant cultural patterns are competitive individualism and scientific rationalism, team members are incapable, except by acts

of cultural resistance, to interact with each other in ways different from those characteristic of the cultural patterns of the parent organization. This means that members with low formal or informal power lack value in the eyes of more powerful team members and are able to contribute less to the knowledge production process than their more powerful team mates. If we understand knowledge, even strictly technical knowledge, to involve interpretations of reality, and we understand the inextricability of technical and social knowledge, then our work as knowledge producers can only be enhanced by the illumination of as many interpretations of reality as available. Since our own interpretation can only reflect our own position and history, it is to our own advantage that we seek out and try to understand the interpretations of others.

***Work with information is severely constrained by power inequalities among workers.***

At some level as a nation, we seem to have understood this. Our attempts to utilize cross-functional teams and to move organizations to team-based structures attest to this. However, we seem to have underestimated the profound impact of the parent organization's structure and culture on the functioning of teams. We seemed to have believed that with a little training, teams would be able to function effectively. We did not consider that the very act of successfully functioning as team members would be countercultural or at odds with the dominant culture in several ways: (a) full participation of all members in the team dialogue is at odds with participation according to position in the formal and informal hierarchy of the organization; (b) team compensation is at odds with the individually-based compensation still existing in most organizations; (c) workers' control over their own movement and use of time is at odds with the tight control held by most supervisors accountable to their managers in hierarchical organizations; (d) easy access to information throughout the organization is at odds with access only to information within the workers' immediate scope of work; and (e) respect for experience-based knowledge is at odds with an overvaluation of professional knowledge.

***If this is true, then what should we do?***

Since teams are countercultural to the dominant cultural patterns in the United States in the late 20th Century, we must think about their use as an attempt to transform the nations' traditionally dominant culture. How is it that culture can be transformed? The way that is typically used in organizations is for top level management to decide what that culture should look like and to initiate an appropriate series of structural and cultural changes in the organization. The attempt to institute teams as the primary unit of work and management is just such a change.

However, culture is the collective construction of its members. To change culture requires not for top leaders to issue an edict, but for those who are members of the culture to come to a new understanding of how things work. This occurs over many years and top leadership is only a part of the process, not in control of it. There are two ways that seem likely to result in a changed collective understanding of how things work. One is for multiple conversations or dialogues to occur which include diverse and competing interpretations. The result of these is not intended to be a consensus but rather an enhanced understanding of the experiences of those who constitute a culture's membership. These conversations or dialogues can occur anywhere in organizations, but their success is predicated on contribution of diverse perspectives. There is no normative goal for these dialogues since what emerges

cannot be predicted. Although these dialogues are educational in nature, they are not intended to educate in the sense of teaching the norms, values, and content knowledge of the existing culture. Like education at its best, they can occur anywhere. Anyone who seeks to educate can sponsor an environment in which such exchanges can occur. The other way that we can begin to change our collective understanding of how things work is to develop a critical awareness of the dominant culture in which we live. This does not mean learning the culture as a universal given, but learning the ways in which our thought and actions are a product of that culture. Both dialogue and critique suggest educational directions capable of helping in the collective transformation of culture. They stand in contrast to the overly simplistic and mechanistic interventions of mandated teamwork and traditional team effectiveness training.

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## **Participatory Literacy Practices: Creating Possibilities**

**Pat Campbell**

**Abstract:** This paper outlines the design of an eight month doctoral study on participatory literacy practices in five adult literacy programs and touches upon some of the possibilities and their implications in the field of adult literacy.

### **Introduction**

In Canada, presumably a democratic society, the principle of equality and rights, opportunity and treatment is enshrined within the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Yet, low literacy skills may prevent millions of adults from enjoying and exercising their social and political rights to the fullest extent (Miller, 1990). The National Anti-Poverty Organization (1992) recommended that "efforts must be made to protect the human, citizenship, social and economic rights of people with low literacy skills and to foster their full participation in society" (p. 94).

If adults with low literacy skills have limited experience with exercising their social and political rights, could adult literacy programs become a forum for these individuals to begin learning about the democratic process? Could adult literacy programs create openings for students to be involved in decision-making with respect to their program? Could the skills and processes they learn move beyond the literacy program and into the wider community?

### **The Design**

The main purpose of this research was to study participatory literacy practices or the active involvement of students in the operation of one or more components of their adult literacy program. The study was guided by the following two questions:

- (1) What are the individual and group experiences of students and literacy workers who are involved in participatory literacy practices?
- (2) What changes do students and literacy workers see in themselves and in their programs as they become involved in participatory literacy practices?

This study examined participatory literacy practices in one urban and four rural literacy programs in Alberta. As a reference point, this study followed the growth and development of student groups within these adult literacy programs.

This study focused on participatory literacy practices, and consequently, I employed a research process that was congruent with the subject matter. The study was conducted within the naturalistic research paradigm (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) and was viewed as a dynamic process whereby the participants had an opportunity to share and develop knowledge collectively which, in turn, could be used to transform individuals, as well as the social practices and relationships within institutions and programs. In this study the participants were invited into this process.

The data regarding the two research questions were collected through individual and group interviews, journals, fieldnotes, photostories, documents analysis and a questionnaire. Photostories were used as a means of generating knowledge and recording information about participatory practices. Photostories were used because they involve a group experience that employs visual and verbal modes of communication which are appropriate for adults with low literacy skills. As well, photostories are a fluid process which created a safe place for students to express desire(s) for change.

### **Possibilities and Implications**

The possibilities that emerged from this study are significant because they point to the need to reconceptualize participatory literacy practices, adult literacy, literacy programs and literacy education.

### **Social Discourse**

It is through the full appropriation of the dominant standard language that students find themselves linguistically empowered to engage in the dialogue with the various sectors of the wider society. What we would like to reiterate is that educators should never allow the students' voice to be silenced by a distorted legitimization of the standard language. The students' voice should never be sacrificed, since it is the only means through which they make sense of their own experience in the world (Freire and Macedo, 1987, p. 52).

### **Learning the Dominant Language**

Participatory literacy practices created a rehearsal ground in which students could learn the dominant language that often excludes them from participating in meetings, in conferences, and in the wider community. The students spoke of their reluctance to attend conferences and meetings because of their limited educational experience. Yet, the unspoken fear appeared to be connected to not speaking the dominant language which they could encounter at these events.

### **Moving from Silence into Speech**

...and when we speak we are afraid  
our words will not be heard  
nor welcomed  
but when we are silent  
we are still afraid.

So it is better to speak  
remembering  
we were never meant to survive.  
(Lorde, 1978, p. 32)



They're afraid to express themselves, they're afraid to make any kind of movements because they figure if they say the wrong thing, they're going to blow it.  
(Geoffrey, an Action Read student)

Sometimes, I just don't know what to say.  
(Heather, a Haines Junction student)

Participatory literacy practices created the possibility for students to speak and be heard. A major benefit of participatory literacy practices was the students' movement from silence into speech through their participation in group meetings, a venue which provided a safe and secure place for them to speak. The students emphasized the oral aspects of literacy such as speaking and seldom, if ever, spoke of the visual aspects of literacy such as reading and writing. Instead, they spoke of their difficulties in overcoming their fear of speech. Feminist writers (Anzaldúa, 1990; hooks, 1988; Lorde, 1984) give credence to the importance of speech and state that for the oppressed, moving from silence into speech is the expression of a movement from object to subject.

The staff, on the other hand, did not view the movement of silence into speech as a direct benefit of participatory literacy practices. Although the staff believed the students had the "right to voice their concerns" and "speak on their own behalfs", they did not explore the problematics which underscore the right to speak. Rather, the staff became frustrated by the students' reluctance to speak their mind and state their opinion(s) at student meetings, often attributing their reluctance to speak to a lack of confidence and social skills. The students, however, tended to attribute their fear of speech to shyness. However, hooks (1988) views shyness as a socially constructed phenomenon, placing silence within the larger sphere of social relation, hooks asks the question "Can their fear [to speak] be solely understood as shyness or is it an expression of deeply embedded, socially constructed restrictions against speech in a culture of domination, a fear of owning one's words, of taking a stand?" (p. 17). The data indicate the validity of hook's view that students' shyness or fear of speech may come from past experience where as working class, non-academic people, they were not heard because they did not speak the dominant language of academics and professionals.

These findings point to the need for the reconceptualization of literacy and to place more emphasis on voice, on speech. The concept of students' voice should be problematized so that both students and staff have a deeper understanding of their fear of speech, rather than equating it with shyness and/or passivity. Opportunities should be created within and perhaps outside of programs for students to move from silence into speech. For instance, volunteer literacy programs could organize safe places for students to come together and to talk about their experiences and their issues. Perhaps, in time, the students could collectively make presentations at community and public forums on issues which personally affect them as a group.

### **Social Relations: Examining Social Identity**

We who have privilege...must recognize it, be aware of what we do have, but we have to un-learn what we would otherwise collude within being co-opted by that privilege - *feel* it as loss, as a barrier - so that guilt can lead to change, and then it is the beginning of knowledge. Knowledge of oneself-in-relation-to-others, not that which separates us from something to be inspected, controlled and dominated, because at bottom we fear it. At this level we need to trust the feeling which can answer the fear, not suppress it and submit our intuitive response to "rational" standards taken over from that universal norm (Godway, 1994, p. 191-192).

Participatory literacy practices also created possibilities for literacy workers to examine their own social identity in relation to students' social identity; it was a chance to move beyond descriptors such as "student" and "literacy worker" and to look at how class, gender and race constitute social identity. By recognizing one's social location and the differences in social identity among people who occupy different subject positions, one may begin to acknowledge privilege and unravel its implications in structuring social relations with people who have less privilege. This study revealed that through examining social identity and privilege and engaging in a dialectical process between thought and action, a transformation in the inequitable social relations which tend to exist between students and literacy workers may occur. When differences between multiple social locations were not examined by students and/or literacy workers, tensions and misunderstandings often arose.

The findings indicated that identity politics play a pivotal role in the transformation or reproduction of power relationships between literacy workers and students. The question, 'Who are we in relation to the students and their issues?' needs to be posed by literacy workers so that they can recognize and explore their privileged positions in relation to that of the students. Arnold et al. (1991) state that "an unwillingness to recognize and learn about the role of social identity will ensure the perpetuation of power relations and will hold back the work of education for social change" (p. 15). This means moving beyond the notion that 'we're all in this together' toward the recognition that the subject positions of educators and students are lodged in power and differences between these subject positions will affect the ways in which we actively interpret the word and the world and the ways in which we work together. Opportunities need to be created so that literacy workers and students can collectively explore the questions of social identity and privilege.

### **The Social Nature of Literacy Education**

Participatory literacy practices created possibilities for students and literacy workers to come together in a new context -- a social context, and as such, opened up a new way of being and learning together.

The findings indicated that the students viewed community as a primary benefit of participatory practices. The students advocated for a social context where they could participate in an informal exchange of information; a place where they could create and share knowledge about issues such as social assistance and being a single parent on a fixed income. The students appreciated the chance to simply "be" with other students to discuss and share ideas. For them, the student group was an opportunity to challenge the oppression that resulted from the isolation and poverty in their lives.

The literacy workers, with the exception of one, did not view creating a sense of community among the students as a principal benefit of participatory practices. Their reluctance to enter into dialogue and to explore collective situations appeared to have its roots in a learner-centred pedagogy which focuses on the functional skills which students desire. This type of education is ensconced in an instrumental ideology, in which, according to Giroux (1983) "knowledge is seen as objective, outside of the existence of the knower: and is "valued for its utility and practical application" (p. 210). Within the realm of functional literacy, there is a focus on product, on skills and on doing. Therefore, it was not surprising the literacy workers spoke of a need "to do" in the student groups versus a need "to be". One literacy worker shared how she "was concerned that are they really doing something the students" or "are they just talking." According to Shor (1980), this emphasis on doing sometimes results in a "liquidation of autonomous time and space" where students and educators can engage in free discussion, sharing of ideas and collective exploration of experiences" (p. 8). Shor (1980) locates discussion within a socio-economic context, and believes that "discussion is a privilege, not a democratically distributed right" (p. 73). In other words, those who are in positions of power and privilege have more time and opportunity to engage in discussion, whereas working class people are often employed in labour intensive and service oriented jobs where one is not rewarded for discussing ideas.

The students' strong desire for community points to the need to challenge the "each one, teach one" concept that pervades throughout Alberta's literacy community. There needs to be more opportunities in programs for group work to occur. By integrating literacy education and social interaction, the possibility for the contextualization of literacy is created. In order to set the stage for the contextualization of literacy, the production-oriented discourse which shapes literacy practice needs to be questioned.

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## SEEING IS BELIEVING: EDUCATING THROUGH A GENDER LENS<sup>1</sup>

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CANADA

**Abstract:** Drawing on feminist perspectives, the author positions policy analysis as an activity that has significant impact on the lives of women, and the attainment of equality. The gender lens project is described as an experimental application of feminist adult education principles in a government setting.

**Introduction:** Some would claim gender has lost its edge as a critical category. The general public, and learners and educators alike, seem weary of having their experience described and critiqued in terms of gender. Feminism has become flaccid, we are told by populist "feminist" writers (e.g. Faludi, Wolf). The concept has been pushed and pulled by the vagaries of social misunderstanding, misogyny, disclaimers, victimage, esotericism and academic posturing. Its significance has been mitigated as well by the movement's acknowledgment that aspects of its own politics and premises are exclusionary, and rooted too uncritically in white, heterosexist, middle class and Eurocentrist assumptions. These are some conditions which challenge feminist adult educators to define a relevant practice for changing the social and economic conditions of gender inequity.

**Purpose:** Given this context, I considered the question of whether issues of sexism (symbolically and socially embedded as they are with other 'isms') can be effectively addressed through educative intervention. This paper describes an experiment in applied feminist adult education in a government setting. It illustrates how a feminist framework might be navigated through the "everyday politics" (Fraser, 1989) of bureaucratic practice, with particular emphasis on the generation of gender sensitive program and policy advice and options.

**The Project:** "Gender lens"<sup>2</sup> is a project of the Ministry of Women's Equality of the British Columbia (Canada) government. The unique position of the ministry as a free-standing entity dedicated to women's equality, coupled with the government's corporate commitment to equality for women, enables it to undertake a significant central agency role. This means, in part, it has responsibility for measures and practices to aid all government ministries to consider gender as part of their policy and program undertakings. The gender lens approach was intended to assist government ministries charged with the responsibility of ensuring that gender and other social and economic implications were expressly considered when policy options were developed for decision-making.

Gender lens is a combination of analytical tool and educative approach, together, which operationalize feminist theory to promote gender responsive policy development. It was designed within the ministry, to assist policy analysts in government to know why and how to include gender analysis in their work. It has been used extensively to identify and analyze "gender implications" of policies,



programs and legislation, and is being specifically adapted to assess gender issues in post-secondary adult education and program design. The gender lens model challenges policy and program developers to consider the role of gender in the conceptualization, design, analysis and implementation of government activities.

**Why Gender Analysis?** The rationale for gender analysis within government and other institutions is very practical: misunderstanding gender differences, and the differential impacts of policies on women and men (and girls and boys) can lead to inadequate planning and design of policies, legislation, programs and procedures. This can be costly in both economic and human terms, and can result in diminished returns to government resources and investments (Rogers, 1993). It can also result in unintended and undesirable outcomes. When governments enunciate a commitment to gender equality, undesirable outcomes of policies include the perpetration or increase of inequality, and failure to support full participation and equality for women and girls.

Feminist inquiry has for decades demonstrated the tremendous costs in terms of lost opportunities, human suffering, violence, abuse, poverty and crime that accrue from gender-based and other social inequities. There is significant loss to a society which fails to benefit from the contributions of women. Governments and other institutions must also consider rulings on the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms which have determined that rights are violated if laws have adverse affects on disadvantaged groups or individuals, intended or not (Status of Women Canada, 1993).

**Approach:** Early experiments with gender assessment made it clear that although ministries might be receptive to gender impact analysis, policy analysts did not necessarily understand how to do it. While some were available, documents or complicated analytical tools were simply not used if their relevance was not obvious, or their format was too cumbersome. It was clear that an approach was needed which incorporated both the theoretical framework of gender analyses, and the practical requirements of learners in the context of their work.

Based on adult education principles derived from frameworks for feminist, community and critical education, a team process was used to develop and pilot a gender lens tool, and an orientation, in the form of a structured exercise, to using the tool. The approach applies, as learning content, situations and written formats provided by and familiar to the learners. Although the method is theory-driven (based on a theoretical understanding of gender, its power operations, and the way it influences differential social outcomes) it is delivered as a practical instructional orientation to gender analysis.

The "how to" of gender analysis is summarized in a document, which is used as a learning tool in the orientation sessions, and as a guide for actual analysis. The tool is a scaled down model outlining a gendered approach to analysis, which is structurally arranged in two parts, described as "lenses". One part (referred to as the **analytical lens**) concentrates on *who* is doing the analysis, and *how* the analysis is done. It tends to focus on the issues described in point #5 of my discussion of the theoretical framework, above. The second part (referred to as the **factor lens**) draws attention

to the content of the analysis, or what *factors* might be considered in a gender analysis. There are eight factors suggested in this part of the document, as ways in which discrimination can occur or equality can be supported in policy and program outcomes. These include: the way legislation takes into consideration women's experiences and circumstances; the existence of systemic discrimination; the role gender plays in economic equality; the right of women to live their lives with independence and dignity; the crucial implications of violence against women; and the importance of considering the impact of gender discrimination in health and social issues.

The lens metaphor is productive, for it suggests to the learner that the approach is a tool (not "the answer"), which when applied, highlights or clarifies realities formerly obscured or invisible. It also emphasizes the context- and content-specific nature of the of gender analysis: it is never done, once and for all, nor are the answers (or the questions) always the same. This strengthens the argument that the tool should not be used as a checklist, but rather as a focusing device, to more clearly "see" possible gender impacts of a particular measure.

**Theoretical Framework:** The gender lens approach is based on feminist and equity principles and theory. Critical elements of the conceptual framework for the approach are:

1. *Gender is an analytical concept describing social relationships between men and women, and the way these are socially and politically constructed and resisted.* This does not equate gender with sex, although the latter, which distinguishes the biological differences between men and women, is often the basis for defining and justifying gendered social roles. The distinction may seem simplistically obvious to feminist educators. However, when unexplored and unarticulated it can pose a significant impediment to understanding gender analysis. It is worth noting that participants in gender lens orientation sessions often spend time debating these distinctions, as well as whether gender as an analytical concept includes both women and men.
2. *Gender identity is lived out in all arenas of life.* Once gender-blindness is overcome, it becomes clear that feminine and masculine identity run like "pink and blue threads" through all social and economic domains: work, state administration, and citizenship, as well as in familial and sexual relations (Fraser, 1989, p.127). It follows that gender analysis and gender equality do not apply only to programs and policies directed specifically to women. Arguably, policies in any area have the potential to either perpetrate or alleviate inequality, by either intensifying or lessening gender-based discrepancies in outcomes.
3. *Equality doesn't necessarily mean treating people the same.* "Sometimes equality means treating people the same despite their differences, and sometimes it means treating them as equals by accommodating their differences" (Abella, 1984, p.3). It is a common assumption that a "gender-blind" policy is always a fair policy. It is sometimes necessary to convince people that women's and men's circumstances differ, and so will the impact of programs and other measures. Feminist scholarship makes the argument that the assumed neutrality of many approaches is already biased, by implicitly ascribing men's lives and experiences as the norm, and women's as "other", or

different. From a gendered perspective, male social dominance is "intrinsic rather than accidental" (Fraser, 1989, p.128).

4. *Gender-aware planning and policies do not assume that discrepancies in benefits and opportunities based on gender simply need to be accommodated. They strive to change these conditions, to make them more equitable.* This means that gender analysis is also focused on social change. A feminist approach to gender analysis looks for ways to increase opportunities for equality. This goes beyond, but includes, examining how a policy may discriminate in its outcomes, and how existing disadvantages may be accommodated.
5. *Gender analysis is focused not just on outcomes, but on the concepts, arguments and language used to justify policy or program decisions.* How needs are interpreted and discussed is intrinsic to policy development. This is a terrain where "inequalities are symbolically elaborated and challenged" (Fraser, 1989, p. 162). Gender analysis should focus on whether the policy "talk" challenges or reinforces existing power structures based on gender. This can depend on:
  - . who is interpreting the need for the policy or program
  - . whose interests are implicit in the interpretation
  - . whether the types and processes, logic and information being used reinstitute or challenge gender power structures
  - . the types of idioms and vocabularies used (e.g. therapeutic, administrative, woman-centered)
  - . which arbitrators of truth are invoked as authority (e.g. scientific experts, financial administrators, women in communities)

It is important as well to pay attention to narrative conventions used to construct the "stories" that constitute the identities of "clients", or people affected by policy decisions. Critical feminist approaches question whether these identities are constituted as "normal", or "deviant", and whether they are seen as passive recipients of programs, or active participants.

The construction of truth in organizations does not have to occur in a closed field. It is important to include "accounts at the periphery" in policy and decision-making. In the use of data, ideology can function by "creating accounts of the world that treat it selectively in terms of a predetermined conceptual framework" (Smith, 1990, p. 93). The framework selects the data: the data proves the framework. Feminist inquiry, in the form of a gendered approach to analysis, can disrupt the "ideological circle" of collecting and using data which are prestructured by a schema, and become "the reality intended by the schema". Smith calls for the use in institutional policy-making of facts and information which encounter the "givens of local historical experience" (p.96), and keep the production and reconstruction of institutional ideologies and knowledge open to such experience. Below, I describe a technique used in gender lens orientation sessions to assist analysts to open their minds to the importance of introducing new data, and new forms of information, to analysis.

**Self-Reflection:** A salient element in the gender lens approach is its emphasis on learner self-reflection. During the 2-3 hour orientation sessions, participants are asked to consider, through a simple exercise, what experiences and biases they may, as analysts, bring to the analysis itself. Following are two examples of how this aspect of the gender lens approach sharpens knowledge and techniques for undertaking an effective assessment of gender implications:

1. It is a tenet of feminist research that qualitative, as well as quantitative data are important. And yet the exercise on reflexivity usually reveals that many analysts have never done qualitative analysis, and do not value it. For many, autobiographical information, case studies or video material may be their only contact with gender-highlighted experiences of poverty, violence, abuse, or sexist treatment. Such matters may remain unconsidered if they are not encountered through qualitative documentation. Whatever its advantages, and the preference for its brand of truth in large institutions, quantitative evidence cannot convey the quality of experience as palpably, nor can it engage the reader or viewer as effectively (or affectively).
2. Community groups are often leaders in identifying and articulating gender issues, especially in local and particular circumstances. They may have information about issues which challenge or embellish statistics or official government knowledge. Yet many analysts do not regularly contact community groups, even informally, when making an analytical assessment. During the gender lens orientation, when participants are asked how many know or contact women's groups in their work as a matter of course, differences are apparent in the type of information sought by analysts, and therefore the focus and nature of analysis.

**Theory is Not Enough:** During the orientation session, participants are asked to quickly brainstorm the gender implications of a simple example of a policy or new program initiative. This allows them to demonstrate, both to themselves and to each other, that they can "do" a gender analysis. This is a small but important element of the session, because it acknowledges the climate in which analysts are being asked to undertake gender analysis. It recognizes that there may be resistance, even hostility, to the very notion of gender analysis, in a climate of anti-diversity and anti-feminist backlash. However, resistance is often due to lack of practical knowledge about how to do gender analysis quickly and effectively; reluctance to add yet another task to an already busy or rushed schedule; or apprehension that omitting the analysis, or doing it "wrong", will result in loss of esteem.

There are both practical and ethical reasons to present gender lens as a non-threatening "package". On the practical side, analysts must see its advantages before they will be disposed to use it. Thus the design of gender lens has emphasized its need to be demonstrably easy to use, an efficient use of time, and directly applicable to analysts' current methods and realities. It is important that this approach (and gender analysis generally) be encountered and welcomed as solving a difficulty, not avoided as a burdensome requirement. This demands not only the right approach, but - if purist educators can tolerate the metaphor - "marketing the product".

Ethical reasons are derived from the project of developing a feminist ethics for educative practice. There are many sources for this, but I name three here which are particularly relevant to the teaching methods used in gender lens orientation sessions.

Ellsworth's (1992) struggles to come to terms with the hierarchical positioning of the knowing intellectual in the tradition of critical pedagogy, and her



reshaping of the learning environment as a safe place for contestation, emotion and resistance.

hooks' (1994) caution that the feminist classroom must not evoke "the sense that feminism is really a private cult whose members are usually white" (and, I would add, female); and her definition of that classroom as a place where conflict can be used as a catalyst for new thinking and growth.

Giroux's (1994) underscoring the Foucauldian notion of the relationship between power and knowledge, and exhorting educators to model practices which encourage learners to question the power inherent in both popular culture and formal education. From Giroux as well, comes the notion that government bureaucracies are part of both the production and consumption of what comes to be both state and popular knowledge. His counsel to educators to use our critical abilities to question the knowledge we both consume and produce, is germane to the process of gender awareness education in government and other institutions.

**Future Applications:** Currently, the gender lens process is under review. Its success to date within government will be evaluated formally in the near future. It has generated attention and interest concerning other applications, and the possibility is being investigated of developing other versions and training approaches. Suggestions for future directions for this project include:

- . expand the programmatic component of gender lens, with more follow-up
- . train more trainers to deliver the orientation sessions
- . provide a newsletter to inform and reinforce the network of people who have taken the orientation
- . broader promotion
- . apply the gender analysis approach as a core strategy for the development of gender program frameworks. This would expand application beyond use as an analytical aid, to program and organizational development and assessment.

It should be noted that although I have been discussing a gender-focused approach, I am implicitly referencing other forms of diversity which are used as social and political categories for discrimination and treatment. Gender lens was designed to concentrate, for the sake of analysis, on gender formations as primary; but it also acknowledges and emphasizes the need to examine, within or separate from gender analysis, differential outcomes of policies based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability, first nations status, age, and many other dimensions. Future work in gender lens will further develop this aspect of policy analysis.

**Conclusion:** I believe the approach has considerable merit as an experimental application of feminist adult education principles. Its strengths include adaptability and relevance to a wide range of government settings and issues. The usefulness of the model will be extended as its potential for broader applications - within and outside government - are realized.

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<sup>1</sup> Proceedings, Adult Education Research Conference, Edmonton, Alberta, May, 1995

<sup>2</sup> "Gender Lens, Policy Analyst Version" is the title of a training document and approach copyrighted by the British Columbia Ministry of Women's Equality.



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## Remapping Adult Education: Beyond Social Movement & Professionalization

Susan Collard

The purpose of this research was to re-map adult education in light of the cultural ideology of intellectuals. The specific aim of the paper was to move toward a critique of the social movement tradition.

**Introduction and Purpose:** Numerous attempts have been made to map the face of adult education, and typically these attempts have drawn on the debates around social movement versus professionalization as a framework for analysis. This is particularly true of the past decade and a half in adult education, a period during which, we are told, adult education has been undergoing a legitimation crisis. In turn, the demise of the andragogical consensus with which this crisis is associated is seen as opening adult education to a number of critical approaches which will reformulate and reinvigorate the ethical and epistemological foundations of adult education practices. Analysis of the critical turn frames a story about adult education which reads that adult education forfeited its emancipatory heritage during the 1950s in attempts to professionalize the field. In turn, the 1980s are read as a rejection of the instrumental rationality and technicism of professionalization and are viewed as an attempt to renew a commitment to adult education's past emancipatory traditions. Central to the debate, then, is an ideology critique of professionalization in which professionalization is revealed as the bete noire of the social movement tradition, its doppelganger without soul or moral conscience, and concomitant with the critique has come renewed interest in the status of adult education in academe. The critical turn in adult education refocusses attention on the place of adult education in healing the wounds occasioned by the encroachment of technological rationality on the life world, and on its constituencies of the dispossessed, the disenfranchised, the mute and the marginal. It is all too easy to take its story at face value for its suasive power, indicated by the extent to which it has become part of the commonsense of the field, speaks to the best intentions of adult educators: a commitment to understanding the metaphysics of human suffering as much as the politics of social injustice. And this is precisely the problem. The social movement-professionalization debates call on and call up the seductive images of a renewed social and moral relevance to contemporary society.

While providing key critical insights into the role of adult education in society, on the "epistemology" of adult education, and on their relation, this research argues that current discussions have failed sufficiently to question the accuracy of their intellectual compass, particularly the premise of an axiomatic opposition between social movement and professionalization. This becomes evident in the apparent lack of complementary critique of the social movement tradition. The purpose of this research was twofold: first, to offer a brief discourse analysis of the social movement-professionalization debates, focussing in particular on the ideology critique of professionalization and the renewed interest in the social movement tradition; and second to re-examine the debates in light of the cultural ideology of intellectuals in an attempt to remap the discourse of academic adult education.

**Perspective and theoretical background.** This research was informed by recent debates between postmodernism, feminism, and a range of neo-Marxisms around the role of the intellectual and the politics of knowledge. The discussions found in this

literature are contextualized as part of a loose typology which is used to re-examine the social movement-professionalization debates.

**Findings: (1) The critique of professionalization.** Two interrelated theses which link together the elements of knowledge and practice emerge in the critique of professionalization, the first historical and the second epistemological. The former suggests that the demise of the social movement tradition is related to its delegitimation with the professionalization of the field in the 1950s (e.g. Law (1987, 1988), Welton (1987), Zacafrakis-Jutz (1991)). The second suggests that, following from this, adult education practices have been deformed by the narrowly scientific focus of professionalizing tendencies. These two theses are frequently brought together in discussion of the consolidation and legitimation of adult education as a field of study; that is, they both identify a social location (or discursive nexus) for what they see as happening, academe. For example, in Collins' (1989) work, professionalization is linked to a "cult of efficiency" which reinforces adult education as "an essentially accommodative endeavour", one which allows adult educators to "avoid serious engagement with those controlling social structures which block the prospects of an adult education endeavour for, and with, a genuinely participatory democracy" (p. 13). Collins goes on to suggest that the professionalization of adult education is linked to the scientification of its research, the conviction that an emphasis on technique and quantification confers legitimation (p. 44). More critical attempts to analyze this debate have been made by Wilson (1991, 1992). Briefly, Wilson argues against the historical thesis, but for the epistemological one, suggesting that adult education has been conceived of in empirical-analytic terms since its inception. However, he relates this primarily to the delegitimation of the practical experience of adult educators, linking the scientification of adult education to attempts to construct and control a knowledge base for defining the profession. History aside, Wilson also locates this process within the intellectual practices of academia. The main danger I see in Wilson's analysis, and to some extent the work of those he argues against, is that it subsumes academe under the rubric of professionalization, presuming the former a reflex of the latter. In brief, his argument offers no explanation for the pervasiveness of the social movement tradition in face of the apparent intellectual hegemony of empirical-analytic or positivistic approaches to research and knowledge production.

A second aspect to this debate becomes apparent on closer examination of what Wexler (1987) would term the class process implicit in the professionalization of adult education, particularly as it relates to the search for an academic status perceived to be contingent upon a supposed scientificity which will help "unify" the field. When looked at in terms of research and knowledge production, the technicist aims or ahistorical technology of the field are seen as a result of an over-reliance on a psychologistic focus, primarily on learning, which in turn is characterized by and as methodology without adequate conceptualization. Thus we find calls from within the social movement tradition to deprofessionalize adult education's research agenda and analytic procedures (Welton, 1987), or discussion of adult education's psychological reductionism (Rubenson, 1982). The critical turn in adult education is given parallel momentum in discussion on research by calls for anything from a greater focus on the social and cultural dimensions of research to learning from social movements. The addition of a sociological focus is seen as either a necessary addendum to current research, or a replacement for it, as for example in the work of Law and Rubenson (1988).

What becomes apparent in analysis is that, ironically, a rhetorical scientism is also found in the work of those arguing for a more sociological or critical focus for adult education. For example, Rubenson links the retarded growth of adult education to an insufficient focus on cumulative knowledge and theory building; Welton (1987) and Law and Rubenson (1988) all call for a better, clearer or simply alternative conceptualization of the field. In other words, the basic problem with adult education is not that it is insufficiently sociological, but that in some senses it is insufficiently scientific -- lacking in clarity, unity or consensus on the phenomena under study. To the extent that the discussion of research from within the social movement tradition acknowledges a greater pluralism of research approaches, it ostensibly differs from the empirical-analytic focus of professionalization. However, to the extent that it reiterates a rhetorical scientism it cannot be said to differ at the metatheoretical level: the premise of a positive social science merely replaces a positive science, holding out its own "truth" of adult education as a social phenomenon. One reading of both the initial opposition between social movement and professionalization would simply suggest that adult education has been experiencing a paradigm shift which has allowed for a greater variety in research and knowledge production. However, this still leaves unanswered questions of both the pervasiveness of empirical studies in light of the critical turn and the persistence of the social movement tradition in light of the apparent hegemony of the legitimating ideologies of professionalization.

(2) Reforming the social movement tradition. Since the 1980s two main intellectual strands have been seen as holding out the promise of revitalizing the social movement tradition and refining its understanding of individual and social transformation: the first is the work of Habermas; the second is a range of feminisms. My sense is that both are presented as variations on a theme of social justice which can enlarge the scope of normative thought in adult education. I will deal briefly with each of these in turn. The incorporation of Habermas's thought into adult education dates as far back as the 1970s with the work of Jack Mezirow (e.g. 1978, 1981, 1985). Although Mezirow's work has been criticized for its assimilation of critical social theory to a liberal humanistic tradition it can nonetheless be said to have opened the ground for subsequent reworkings of the implications of Habermas's thought for adult education. Simplifying radically, I would suggest that Knowledge and Human Interests (1971) has proved valuable in furthering a critique of instrumental rationality, and hence the ideology critique of professionalization in adult education. Subsequent use of Habermas's theory of communicative action (1984, 1987) has been used to refine a normative vision for adult education in two ways. First it helps extend critique beyond the pessimism of the first generation Frankfurt School thinkers, particularly the negative vision of the total rationalization of society. Second, it has allowed for a "new" normative vision of adult education conceived of as a social practice fostering communicative competence. There have been a number of criticisms of Habermas which call into question his adoption of the social movement tradition. As these are by now well known, I will list them briefly: (1) the counterfactual nature of the ideal speech situation and the relation of communicative reason, truth and consensus - is communicative competence a means or an end?; (2) the ideal situation of discourse tends to disregard difference and exclude those who have no voice - i.e. it is implicitly hierarchical; (3) the ideal speech part if not in toto - i.e. it is historically, culturally and politically relative (e.g. Benhabib, 1986; Bernstein, 1985; McCarthy, 1978). In essence, what these criticisms do is bring into question



the viability of Habermas's thought in attempt to bring about social justice, a key element of social tradition thinking.

While the advent of feminist work in adult education can be considered part of the current critical turn, it stands in a more complex relation to the field as it includes in its analyses a critique and reconstitution of the normative bases of much of the social and political thought on which social movement adult education resides, including the work of Habermas (e.g. Hart 1985, 1990, 1992). Feminist work in adult education shares common aims with critical, radical, and left-oriented approaches to the field, but it is marked by a greater emphasis on the deficiencies of the current knowledge base and by a constant focus on issues of power. In Habermasian terms, it is more interested in working through the situation of critique with its implied asymmetries of power than in forwarding communicative competence as a new regulative ideal for practice. Feminist work frequently draws together elements of "knowledge" and "power" articulating arguments on omissions or misconstructions in the knowledge base with, for example, theories of gender, patriarchal ideology, or male dominance. Within this it shares the critique of professionalization but it does so by stating that the emancipatory tradition requires active and conscious constituency represented by women if it is to prosper (e.g. Miles, 1989). Again, I think there are a number of problems here. First, much feminist work in adult education still relies on essentializing categories such as "women's experience". Second, feminists within adult education have yet to examine why at this particular juncture the social movement tradition has come to look at feminism as a way of revitalizing the critical turn in the field. And third, in its focus on dominative power, feminist theory within the field has not considered the contradictions of its own presence within the academic discourse of adult education. If, as Ryan (1982) suggests, the reconstruction of knowledge cannot be separated from the redistribution of power, we have to question not only whether such a shift has taken place, but for which feminisms it has done so. In other words, the politics of shifting boundaries in the social movement tradition specifically, and in the discourse of adult education generally, need further examination. What does seem apparent is the critical turn in adult education is related to a discursive redefinition of a normative role for adult educators from professionals to social critics (Griffin, in Peters and Jervis (Eds), 1991). In order to examine the persistence of the social movement tradition, and to begin the shift from analysis to critique, I drew on current debates around intellectuals to help further an understanding of some of the apparent contradictions noted above.

On Intellectuals. Historically, the rise of the intellectual is associated with modernist era, with the increasing consolidation of power in the hands of the nation state and with changing conceptions of the educative possibilities of mankind. While the exact dating differs, the key period identified is that of the bourgeois revolutions of the eighteenth century. To isolate some key points from this debate, as purveyors of reasons and truth, intellectuals are central to the bourgeois revolutions. Within these, their relations to the mobs/masses for whom they proclaimed emancipation, and whom to some extent they manipulated, was ambiguous in that it broke down at the question of the masses political representation post-revolution. With post-revolutionary success, the utility of intellectuals disappears as the state develops the political technology which was to reduce or render redundant their legitimizing services. The centrality of intellectuals for subsequent revolutionary movements is predicated on precisely the same qualities that served them in the bourgeois



revolutions: training as a universal intellectual in which intellectual knowledge is seen as equivalent to reason. A central shift in ideas occurs at the same time which in part accounts for the "indispensability" of intellectuals, namely those narratives of culture that represent the world as man made and guided by norms and values reproduced through teaching and learning. It is this vision that articulates and legitimizes the role of intellectuals. What is key here is the tacit assumptions which guide this vision: human beings are incomplete; humanization is a learning process split into the acquisition of knowledge and the repression of the base/animal/natural; the completion of humanization therefore requires a system of education. In other words, we see a shift here to the social indispensability of knowledge and of those who produce and purvey it. With the diminishment of the value of culture to the reproduction of political power, and the disengagement of intellectuals as collective guardians of social value from the state, came the increasing freedom of irrelevance to politics, or absorption into its bureaucracies.

The diminishment of political/cultural intellectuals is shadowed by the rise of expertise, generally viewed as a particularly twentieth century phenomenon. A number of works have detailed the rise of the professional-managerial class (Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich, 1976) of the scientific-technical intelligensia (Gorz, 1976), or of the new class (Gouldner, 1979). To some extent the discussion of the new class point to a tension between cultural/political intellectuals and scientific intelligensia. Although both are drawn within the orbit of the state to function as a knowledge elite, scientific intelligensia are primarily apolitical (separating knowledge from its uses or hiding under a veneer of professionalism). At the same time, the twentieth century also saw the emergence of the debates on intellectuals that were a theme of socialist theory of the early twentieth century, perhaps the best known of which is Lenin's formulations on vanguardism. The general tenor of current debates on intellectuals points to the continued ambivalence surrounding intellectuals' positions, and particularly to the problems of autonomy and hierarchy in their mediate place between State/party and mob/constituency (Aronowitz, 1988, 1992; Bauman, 1987, 1992).

The question of hierarchy becomes central to analysis of the failures of the new class. In Gouldner's (1979) argument, hierarchy is related to what he terms the culture of careful and critical discourse (CCD), a central element of the cultural ideology of both cultural/political and technical/scientific intellectuals. Initially CCD suggests a model of constant critique, one which leads intellectuals to forward themselves as the new arbiters of social justice. But it goes beyond this. In that CCD has the capacity to raise individuals from "lowness in the conventional social hierarchy" (p. 59), i.e. is a class process, it holds the potential for subverting that hierarchy. But this does not happen, for while egalitarian in terms of its own adherents the new class is by its CCD hierarchically related to those outside its boundaries (Jay, 1988). As Gouldner puts it "Those who talk well, it is held, excel those who talk poorly or not at all. It is no longer enough simply to be good. Now one has to explain it" (p. 85).

**Conclusions: Remapping adult education.** The analyses of intellectuals brings into focus the key relation of knowledge, intellectuals and society. Recent debates on intellectuals have been marked by the sense of failure of intellectuals as a class, by its retreat to the ivory tower, by its failure of prophecy (Gouldner, 1979; Jaccoby, 1987; Etzioni-Halevy, 1985). Intellectuals' knowledge is seen as productive of neither emancipation (a failure of political/cultural intellectuals) nor of the good life (a failure

of scientific intelligensia). Centrally, Gouldner's work points to an almost inevitable alienation of intellectuals from those in whose name they struggle, inevitable because it is caused by something central to intellectuals' self-definition: the ideology of CCD. The elements that Gouldner isolates are in turn the same ones that are seen as characteristic of intellectuals as far back as the Enlightenment, particularly the focus on reason and science to provide the "truth" that will guarantee their work as being of social utility. What these debates have also brought to the fore is the increasing tension between scientific intelligensia and political/cultural intellectuals. As science has been held up as the normative guide for intellectual practice, so intellectuals as visionaries of the social have faded in prominence. With the advent of post-modernity, the tendency toward auto-critique of political/cultural intellectuals has been notably exacerbated as their relative status has declined: intellectuals are now merely workers with their box of tools (Foucault, in Gordon (Ed), 1972), and the efficacy of their attempts to foster communicative competence through rational dialogue is seen as limited mostly to intellectuals themselves. Retaining the desire for metaprofessional authority in an era which constantly echoes a threndoy for the loss of metatheoretical grounding, intellectuals have lost their normative role as social "legislators" (Bauman, 1987).

The social movement-professionalization debates in adult education to some extent resemble the situation the literature depicts. Broadly speaking, the positions reflect those of political-cultural intellectuals (social movement) and scientific-technical intelligensia (professionalization). What the social movement tradition has so far failed to acknowledge is its own history as part of the ongoing tradition of intellectuals. This, I suggest has led it to (re) produce some of the failures of political/cultural intellectuals, if only rhetorically or discursively. In particular, I believe that the failures of intellectuals as it relates to the ideology of CCD can lead us to query the recent vogue for Habermas' work. It is precisely because the norms of the ideal speech situation resemble those of CCD that we have at least to be wary of the possibility that the use of Habermas merely reintroduces a old elitism under the guise of a communicative ethic. For once again, intellectuals are the group best positioned by virtue of their norms of rational dialogue to begin the shift from critique to discourse. And I believe similar criticism could be made of feminist intellectuals qua intellectuals.

In arguing that professionalization has constituted the prevailing ideology of adult education theory and practice for the past forty years, adherents of the social movement tradition have implicitly spoken for the superior truth and reason of their position, if not for its scientific status. At the same time, its own history and ideology has remained unexplored, silent testament that "the paths of desire ensnarl the paths of knowledge" (Kristeva, 1982). From the perspective of the above analysis, the social movement's claims to status as the official marginalized other of mainstream adult education is suspect, for intellectuals have always held a key place in revisioning the social, at least until recently. I would suggest initially that the discourse of adult education on social movement and professionalization reflects an organization of two key legitimating tropes for intellectuals, "social emancipation" and "scientific practice" into a binary which helps shape the identity of the field and of its practitioners in conformity with the cultural ideology of intellectuals. Beyond this, the current pessimism over the status of intellectuals in combination with critiques of the elitism of (modernist) intellectuals, suggests a further need to think through some of the blind spots in the radical tradition in adult education thinking.

References available on request

## EXAMINING THE CASE FOR CLASS ANALYSIS IN ADULT EDUCATION RESEARCH

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**Abstract:** An explanation is given for the absence of class analysis in North American adult education discourse. Various perspectives on class analysis are examined. A case is made for class analysis and class action in adult education research and practice.

### Introduction

In North American adult education research and scholarly work undertaken within the professionalized discourse of modern practice (andragogy), there is ample recognition that the Great Democracy is beset by social inequalities. Though apparent, these social inequalities are not treated as systemic. In this view, the role of adult education is to assist the "disadvantaged" and those from "lower socio-economic groups" in helping themselves take advantage of opportunities for advancement available to all citizens who have the required competence. Accordingly, there is no need for adult educators as "change agents" to reflect on the role adult education plays in sustaining existing class relations. A major concern for adult education research is to guide practitioners in becoming more effective "facilitators" of individualistic, and individualizing, forms of learning which will allow adults to cope and to advance in today's society.

This mainstream discourse on contemporary research and practice in North American adult education is nicely exemplified in the original essay on "Androgogy (sic) Versus Pedagogy (Knowles, 1968). There is much that is progressive about this essay. It provided the outlines for a discourse on a distinctive profession and for the definition of a discipline around which adult education research on strategies to assist learners as individuals could be formulated. However, the article is remarkable for the absence of any reference to the momentous social upheavals that came to a head in the year it was published. Shorn of any reference to the larger social context, the North American andragogical research agenda has, understandably, provided no relevant space for studies incorporating class analysis.

### The Radical Tradition and a Touch of Class

At the periphery of the adult education research arena occasional papers are published which invoke the legacy imbued with a notion of adult education as part of the process of social change. While in general this radical tradition is sympathetic to what we would think of as working class interests, there is a marked absence of class terminology within its discourse. In the North American context the radical legacy is typically identified with Eduard Lindeman's The Meaning of Adult Education (1961). Reference to the work still fits comfortably at the edge of conventional discourse in adult education because Lindeman upholds the familiar high regard for individualism which is enthroned within an American notion of democracy. In conformity with the

ideology of America as a classless society, the radical tradition emanating from Lindeman has focused on issues of status rather than class.

The Fall 1972 edition of Adult Education: A Journal of Research and Theory published articles introducing to the North American academic adult education forum the radical pedagogy of Paulo Freire ("Freire, Conscientization and Adult Education" by Arthur Lloyd) and an account of an early class-based struggle for control of worker education ("The Mechanics' Institute Education for the Working Man?" by Michael Collins).

Lloyd draws attention to the unreflective middle-class bias of American adult education. In positing conscientization as the central pedagogical strategy of a radical alternative to adult education as a middle-class enterprise, Lloyd relates Freire's theory of education as cultural action to the Freirean theory of revolutionary action in Third World settings. Outside of a Third World setting, and owing in part to a significant absence of class analysis in Freire's theory of cultural action, subsequent studies on conscientization within the North American academic adult education arena have been largely co-opted by adult education as the unreflective middle-class enterprise described by Lloyd. The philosophy of consciousness which underlies Freire's notion of conscientization, bereft of a collective agency for revolutionary action, has been readily accommodated to the ideology of individualism inherent in the American concept of democracy.

Even the rare instances of works in adult education which look to areas generally considered to fall under the broad umbrella of class related issues, such as unionism and labor movements, tend to shy away from clear-cut commitment to issues around class action, class analysis, and class consciousness. The concern with class divisions, relationships, and contradictions that are discernible in Collins' account of the short struggle on behalf of working class interests in the early days of the mechanics' institutes movement has not seemed relevant to contemporary circumstances in North America. However, a notable exception to the virtual absence of any significant discourse on class within the contemporary academic adult education arena has been provided with the recent publication of Learning in Social Context: Workers and Adult Education in the Nineteenth Century Chicago (Schied, 1993). The book could well prefigure an interest in class analysis as well as a concept of adult education as a political movement discernible in the aspirations of socialist educator Thomas Hodgskin, the original founder of the mechanics institutes.

### The Critical Turn

Contemporary research informed by critical theory and post-modernism, including studies on gender, race, new social movements and the workforce, signifies a continuing commitment within academic adult education to social and political concerns. The emergence of Frankfurt School Critical Theory (especially that of Jurgen Habermas) within the North American adult education research forum has served to illuminate the instrumentalism, and coercive potential, of pedagogical strategies associated with the andragogical model. The influence of Frankfurt School Critical Theory, providing a rational basis for Freire's emphasis on the emancipatory prospects of dialogue, has been useful in this regard. A rejection of Marxist and some neo-Marxist claims about the historical role of the working class as the agency for revolutionary change accounts, in large part, for the acceptability of Frankfurt School Critical Theory within the North American academic adult education arena.



However, the pragmatism allowing for this acceptance has been accompanied by a tendency, fraught with contradiction, to effect a rapprochement between the rationality of the Habermasian project and the relativizing discourses of postmodernist deconstruction.

A central concern we share about the present course of critical adult education is what happens to the analyses of exploitation and domination that have traditionally accompanied class analysis? In substituting issues which stand in for, or accompany, class analysis, has critical adult education succumbed to a pessimism of the intellect and an atrophy of the will in turning away from struggles which seem no longer romantic and which hold no promise of future revolutionary glory? Do we simply buy into the Frankfurt School and postmodernist views on mass culture as an instrument of social control from which there is an absence of any sense that either mass culture or consumerism could be experienced in alternative "counter-hegemonic" ways?

Like Freirean radical democracy, critical adult education, incorporating the various feminisms (liberal, ecological, socialist) and other significant alternatives to a mainstream pedagogy which pragmatically co-opts them all as add-ons, is now losing its critical edge. It is at this juncture that class analysis - to the extent that it reveals class interests, antagonisms, and the dimensions of class action- can serve to revitalize critical adult education and open up prospects for adult education as a political movement in the interests of the majority of ordinary men and women. The question is whether class analysis can provide the means of transcending the fragmenting effects of identity politics and the competing claims from various "marginalized voices," without ignoring the critical issues they represent.

### Class Analysis

It does not require an allegiance to orthodox Marxism for us to understand that in the mid1990's we inhabit a world that is neither post-capitalist nor post-industrial. Confident assertions about the "end of ideology" and the "end of history" have virtually disappeared from liberal intellectual discourse (in the liberal press and academic journals) where it enjoyed some cachet in the wake of Fukuyama's widely proclaimed book, The End of History and the Last Man (1992). In popular discourse, there is scarcely a murmur now about President Bush's "New World Order which was brashly announced following the Gulf War. Human history and our ideologies remain with us. As for the brilliant insights of postmodernism, they begin to appear increasingly as a manifestation of the contradictions and discomforts we experience under conditions of late capitalism. (Metzsche revisited via Foucault, Derrida, and Braudillard).

Capitalism is fundamentally a class society (on this Marx and Weber and their respective epigone are agreed). So while it might be argued that the divisions are less apparent than in other regions of the world, the United States and Canada are class societies.

For Weber, classes refer to groups within which individuals experience the same status position vis a vis the rest of society. These groups are defined according to the degree of control they can exercise over goods and services. In Weberian social theory, individuals in their roles of consumers are the unit of analysis. From a Marxist perspective, classes are not just categories within the market economy. Rather, classes are *relationships* which continuously undergo change in the course of human



development (history). The working class is identified through its exclusion from control over property (and, hence, the means of production) and from the necessity to offer its labor for sale.

The Weberian categorical scheme allows for measurable definitions of various characteristics such as educational level, occupation, and so on. As well as a concern for describing social roles. Marxian analysis calls for a collective notion of class in which agency (the potential for class action) and varying levels of class consciousness are located. It is the more nuanced Marxian account of class, requiring a dialectical apprehension of the cultural, economic, and political effects emerging from class relationships, that is most difficult to advance in the literature of North American adult education theory and practice. This academic context remains largely influenced, even in its critical discourse, by the American conception of equality of opportunity within a classless society in which inequalities are still prevalent, but not structured.

A view that Marxian class analysis derives from a theory of society constrained by economic determinism is, unfortunately, widely-held and misinformed. Marx himself firmly rejected this vulgar characterization (... therefore I am no Marxist). In this regard, it is important to stress that class cannot be understood in isolation from culture, gender, ideology, regional politics, and race. Far from being a simplistic concept that tends towards economic determinism, class illuminates the social processes and social relations which constitute the political economy.

Subsequent class theorists working within the Marxian legacy, such as Dahrendorf (1959), show how the working class and the capitalist class have become more diversified, an eventuality that Marx seems not to have anticipated. Dahrendorf argues that class should be characterized in terms of the possession of, or exclusion from, authority. Hence, power rather than property ownership becomes the primary defining characteristic of class position. However, while departing from an orthodox Marxism, this view does not collapse into postmodernist relativism.

The way back to class analysis for postmodernist thinkers, who now have nowhere to go (post-postmodernity?) and yet still wish to evade the rational discourse of Marxian and Weberian analysis, might be through Ossowski's use of spatial metaphor in the representation of class. Ossowski writes about class in terms of "vertical divisions" and "schemes of gradation" to illuminate dichotomous positionings such as *rulers-ruled, rich-poor, property owners-those without property, those who command-those who obey*, and so on. Ossowski's "schemes of gradation" and juxtapositions are viewed as neutral. The analytical project is concerned with ordering, not with inter-dependence (as in Marxian class analysis). In this regard, Ossowski accounts for the conventional notion of social class favoured by most contemporary North American sociologists.

While questioning the validity of orthodox Marxism's concept of class analysis with its central thesis concerning the revolutionary vocation of the working class (even in regard to nineteenth century capitalist society about which Marx wrote), Giddens argues that class relationships remain relevant in today's society. Property ownership (command over the means of production are still significant in defining these relationships). In this view, claims about the irrelevance of conventional class analysis associated with the argument that contemporary society is too diversified - an assumption inherent in the classless discourse of modern adult education practice and research - are revealed as untenable. At the same time, the abandonment of

class analysis in Frankfurt School Critical Theory (a la Habermas and Marcuse) is shown to be premature. It does not follow that simply because the working class has failed so far to fulfill the revolutionary role ascribed to it by Marx, that class relationships have lost their significance, and that working class consciousness cannot develop to overcome the media conditioning of an overly managed society.

Investigations into the role of the state as central to the emergence of the "new working class" and theorizing on the demise of organized capitalism are paralleled by both changes in the subject(s) of class discourse and a more elaborate theorization of class itself. These considerations raise, from different perspectives, key questions about the relations between social classes and ideology, between economic and political domination. Poulantzis (1984), for example, offers a tripartite analysis of class which suggests class exists on three levels: the economic, the political, and the ideological, and he further suggests that people occupy differing class locations at different places on these levels. Such arguments are interesting in that they purport to move away from what they allege are the simpler formulations of classical Marxism. However, in our view the elaboration of ideology these revisionist arguments entail loses sight of the relation of ideology to class to ideological domination, to exploitation.

### Class Action/Consciousness

A useful way for adult educators to understand class at this time is from the historical perspective of class action exemplified in E.P. Thompson's, The Making of the English Working Class (1984). It is from this perspective of class action that evidence of escalating class warfare in the form of massive cut-backs to publicly funded education, social services, and in the ideological rhetoric ("reform" initiatives, "need to compete in global market-place", "Contract with America") on deficit reduction becomes apparent. In class terms it is not difficult to discern who gains, who loses, and who gets to be blamed under current incentives for global economic restructuring. As more workers are relegated to the reserve army of unemployed (or "occasionally employed") and members of the under-class experience worsening conditions and increasing callousness from the state, large numbers of lower middle-class people are becoming proletarianized. Accordingly, adult educators should now be clearer, in Antonio Gramsci's sense of the organic intellectual's role, about whose interests they serve and whose side they are on. For behind the "Contract with America" discourse and the Canadian notion of "Reform" lies the spectre of fascism which is beginning to re-appear, at both the intellectual and mob levels, in parts of Europe. In Germany the reasoned and class-free critical theory of Jurgen Habermas, extolling liberal democratic values, is losing out to a class antagonistic intellectual discourse (invoking Nietzsche) and a neo-fascist political ideology. These are times when class action and class consciousness reveal where the new lines for social struggle have been drawn in the context of global restructuring.

The emergence of a focus on class action and class consciousness within critical adult education would have to overcome the (old) "new left" discourse about the disappearance of the working class. This discourse, exemplified in Andre Gorz's Farewell to the Working Class (1982), can tell us more about the disillusionment and sensibilities of progressive middle class intellectuals than about working class consciousness. A complete account of why this notion of a disappearing working class is premature would point to how even reports about the decline in numbers of workers

associated with conventional points of production in advanced industrial nations, though starkly apparent, have been exaggerated. Further, it is clear that this tendency has been off-set by an increase in the number of workers in the service industries and the proletarianization of many salaried employees, formerly self-designated as professional middleclass. And when the highly populated developing countries are taken into this account, it becomes apparent that on a world-wide scale the working class, even at conventional points of industrial production, is on the increase. In these regards, it is inconceivable that that class struggles, at some level, would not be occurring on a regular basis even though they are not reported in national and international news media.

Yet in terms of the discourses on retreat from class and from political action, what seems apparent at this juncture is that the relationship of class to social struggle is no longer given in advance. Within classical Marxist theorizing, class is a structuring relationship and "other identities" are seen as a displacement of class. The current political scene, however, focuses on a broad range of identity politics which are markedly different from class politics in that they turn away from economic exploitation and redistribution towards a broader scope which includes consideration of "the good life" in a consumer society. This tendency is apparent in new social movements discourse which, under the influence of pluralistic and relativizing postmodernist thought, eschews any notion of a revolutionary subject of history. However, the replacement of "insurgent" subjects of history for a revolutionary subject of history raises a number of questions around both the ability of new social movements to avoid reabsorption into a purely redistributive framework of state initiated reform, and the extent to which interest group pluralism overcomes the further privatization (alienation?) of individuals in political processes which recode social struggle as policy issues and social problems. Further, even if working class identity is viewed as more fragmented than formerly, this eventuality provides no answer to the absence of class discourse. For if we have learned anything from postmodernism it is that any identity - including those of new social movements, feminism, patriarchy - is an essentialist fiction. In this view, if the absence of univocal identity does not prevent political action on the part of individual new social movements then, logically, the absence of a clearly defined working class identity should not prove a barrier to prospects for working class politics and action.

Democracy has replaced revolution as the new telos of the social imaginary and the conjunction of neo-capitalism and state interventionism forms its object of attack. To this extent, radicalism takes a different avenue, seeing the gains made by working class movements, however flawed, as something to be held on to. Given this, the absence of class discourse seems ironic. We would suggest, therefore, that the absence of class discourse does not mean an absence of class struggle, and that talk of the fragmentation and disappearance of class is equally a fiction. Firstly, class has always been an heterogeneous term and class culture has extended beyond the narrow confines, as defined by some orthodox Marxists, of an exclusive focus on economic exploitation. Second, questions around objective or determinate criteria for class are at present less germane than questions around the possibility of class discourse to shape political and cultural life, especially given current discussion about a presently apathetic and disenfranchised new poor/new working poor who have long remained invisible in debates about class.

## Conclusion

Class stratification as a form of analysis is highly appropriate to research in modern adult education practice. In particular, critical adult education needs to take on issues around class action with the re-emergence of what amounts to class warfare in connection with global economic restructuring. This critical understanding brings with it a recognition of the importance of political struggle and the need to reclaim space for class-based ideological discourse within the public sphere. Class is not just an analytical device. It is about ideology, dynamic relationships, and political practice. Given the fertile contributions to adult education research from women's studies, a challenge for class analysis is to make connections between the home, the workplace, and the community - between class and concerns around culture, gender, and race. In the wake of Frankfurt School Critical Theory and postmodernist frothiness which have defined the course of the critical turn in adult education, class analysis and class identity can help critical adult education find a sense of direction.

As for class identity, if conditions which are now supposed to lead to classlessness or a fragmented class consciousness have persisted for four decades, how is it that people are still able to explain their own sense of class affiliation? More than this, the absence of class discourse is highly disturbing not only because it seems to negate a whole facet of working class people's lives, but because the absence at this time of class discourse as a source of radical potential seems to presage the ultimate disappearance of other radicalisms from the public sphere. It becomes imperative to question why we no longer talk about class in order to reinvigorate class analysis, and to ward off the further diminishment of radical action.

The wretched of the earth still make up over 90 per cent of humanity. There is a struggle. It is about class. And adult education should be there.

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## **The Use of Learning Strategies: An International Perspective**

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### **Abstract**

Learning strategies were examined for students at a post-secondary college in Canada. While some differences were found due to groupings, no distinct patterns were found. A discriminant analysis produced a weak function which was different from previous studies.

### **Introduction**

For over a decade, educators have turned to learning styles as a means of identifying and accounting for individual differences in learners. Instruments such as those by Kolb, Gregorc, Canfield, and Dunn have been developed to measure these differences. However, as Bonham (1989) has pointed out, most of these have inherent weaknesses, and research studies in this area have consistently failed to find any differences that can be attributed to learning styles. Consequently, adult educators are increasingly turning to the concept of learning strategies as a means of exploring individual differences in learning.

Regardless of the type of setting, learners use various strategies to accomplish their learning needs. Learning strategies are those techniques or specialized skills that the learner has developed to use in both formal and informal learning situations (McKeachie, 1988). They are "the techniques and skills that an individual elects to use in order to accomplish a specific learning task....Such strategies vary by individual and by learning objective" (Fellenz & Conti, 1989, p. 7-8). Since the recent development of the Self-Knowledge Inventory of Lifelong Learning Strategies (SKILLS), researchers such as Hill (1992), McKenna (1991), and Yabui (1992) have found that various groups of learners can be distinguished by the learning strategies which they use. However, so far all of the reported research using this instrument which was developed to specifically investigate adult learning strategies has been conducted in the United States.

Medicine Hat College is a comprehensive, community-oriented post-secondary institution located in Medicine Hat, Alberta. This two-year school offers a variety of degrees and certificates in university transfer and vocational programs. Because of its mission and size, the emphasis of the faculty is upon teaching. Consequently, the institution is committed to professional development and is constantly looking for new knowledge that will help staff to improve instruction and student learning. However, as Schon (1987) implies, there is a question of where this new knowledge will emanate. In the past, the staff had turned to outside sources. However, in this situation the college decided to conduct a field-based case study to generate its own knowledge that was specific to its individual students and context.

A recent study by Hill (1992) suggested the format for the study. Hill had examined the relationship of learning strategies to academic achievement in the seven tribal colleges of Montana. Using discriminant analysis, he investigated the difference between the high achievers and low achievers in the colleges. He found that

the factor that discriminated the groups was Uncritical Acceptance with the low achievers more willing to challenge things in their learning than the high achievers. Because of the relevance and proximity of this study to their own situation, the Medicine Hat study was patterned after the Hill study.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the learning strategies of students at a Canadian two-year community college in Alberta. The study involved developing a profile of the students at the college, and the scores were used to investigate if learning strategies could be used to discriminate between the most successful learners as measured by grade point average and the least successful learners.

### Methodology

The case study design was used to systematically study the learning strategies of the students at Medicine Hat College. Learning strategies were measured with the Self-Knowledge Inventory of Lifelong Learning Strategies (SKILLS). This valid and reliable instrument consists of real-life learning scenarios with responses drawn from the areas of metacognition, metamotivation, memory, critical thinking, and resource management (Conti & Fellenz, 1991). Each of the five areas consists of three specific learning strategies: Metacognition--Planning, Monitoring, and Adjusting; Meta motivation--Attention, Reward/Enjoyment, and Confidence; Memory--Organization, External Aids, and Memory Application; Critical Thinking--Testing Assumptions, Generating Alternatives, and Conditional Acceptance; and Resource Management--Identification of Resources, Critical Use of Resources, and Use of Human Resources. SKILLS has two forms of six scenarios; both forms were used in this study.

A stratified sample based upon program areas was selected. Since the students were randomly distributed within each program, 19 classes were chosen across the various program areas. Each class was randomly assigned one form of SKILLS. A total of 324 students participated in the study. This included 213 females and 111 males who ranged in age from 17 to 49; 184 completed Set 1 of SKILLS, and 140 answered Set 2. Most (86.9%) of the students were in certificate and diploma programs while a smaller group (13.1%) were in the college transfer program. Overwhelmingly, the group was Caucasian (93.7%) with only a few Aboriginal people (1.9%), Asians (3.5 %), African-Americans (.30), and Hispanics (.6%). The overall grade point average on a four-point scale for the group ranged from .83 to 4.0 with a mean of 2.97.

### Findings

The overall profile for the students at the college revealed a divergent group of learners; no single learning strategy area or specific learning strategy was predominant. The possible range of scores for the learning strategies areas is 12 to 36. All the group means were near the middle of this range: Metacognition--22.7; Metamotivation--23.3; Memory--23.7; Critical Thinking--23.6; and Resource Management--25.6. Likewise, the individual learning strategies, which had a range of 4 to 12, had little divergence: Planning--8.6; Monitoring--7.3; Adjusting--6.8; Attention--8.6; Reward/Enjoyment--7.1; Confidence--7.4; Organization--8.3; External Aids--8.4; Memory Application--7.2; Testing Assumptions--9.0; Generating Alternatives--7.6;

Conditional Acceptance--7.2; Identification--8.9; Critical Use--8.0; and HumanResources--8.7.

SKILLS consists of six scenarios. From these, respondents pick four that are most meaningful to them. A review of the responses revealed that some scenarios were more popular than others. Set 1 consists of scenarios dealing with Auto Insurance, Burial Customs, Local History, Pet Care, Job Regulations, and Dealing with Cholesterol. Pet Care was selected by four-fifths of the respondents. The other scenarios were each chosen by about two-thirds of the respondents except for the least popular Burial Customs which was answered by slightly over half of the respondents. Females had a stronger preference for the Pet Care and Dealing with Cholesterol scenarios while many more males selected Auto Insurance. Set 2 contained scenarios dealing with Putting Together a Bike, Dental Care, Recruiting Leaders, Letter to the Editor, Visiting a National Park, and Care of a Relative. Most (92.1%) selected Putting a Bike Together. The popularity of the others was as follows: Visiting a National Park--73.6%; Care of a Relative--68.6%; Dental Care--66.4%; Letter to the Editor--49.3%; and Recruiting Leaders--48.6%. More males selected Dental Care and Recruiting Leaders while many more females picked Care of a Relative. When analyzed by the program areas, certificate and diploma students had a greater preference for Pet Care, Job Regulations, Dealing with Cholesterol, and Care of a Relative while college transfer students more often picked Burial Customs and Letter to the Editor.

Differences in the use of learning strategies were found when the participants were grouped according to gender, the type of program in which the learners were enrolled, age, grade point level, and major. Gender influenced the use of learning strategies in two of the general areas and with two specific learning strategies. Females had a greater preference than males for Resource Management ( $F=10.75$ ,  $df=1/323$ ,  $p=.001$ ) with a greater use of Critical Use of Resources ( $F=8.18$ ,  $df=1/323$ ,  $p=.005$ ) and Use of Human Resources ( $F=8.80$ ,  $df=1/323$ ,  $p=.003$ ). Males, however, made greater use of Metacognition ( $F=6.84$ ,  $df=1/323$ ,  $p=.009$ ). When grouped by program areas, the certificate and diploma students made greater use of the specific metacognition area of Planning ( $F=9.57$ ,  $df=1/320$ ,  $p=.002$ ) and the overall area of Metacognition ( $F=5.47$ ,  $df=1/320$ ,  $p=.02$ ) than the college transfer students. To investigate possible differences in learning strategies due to age, the four age categories of 17-19, 20-21, 22-29, and 30-49 were created. Significant differences were found for the specific learning strategies of Monitoring ( $F=3.01$ ,  $df=3/321$ ,  $p=.03$ ) and Reward/Enjoyment ( $F=2.60$ ,  $df=3/321$ ,  $p=.05$ ). Post hoc analysis revealed that two distinct groups existed for Monitoring with those over 21 scoring higher than those 21 years of age and under. For Reward/Enjoyment, the 17-19 year old group and the 22-29 year old group used the strategy more than the other groups. For examination of the relationship of learning strategies to grades, students were divided into four quartiles. The range of grade point averages (GPA) for each of these groups was as follows: .83-2.57; 2.58-3.05; 3.06-3.46; and 3.47-4.00. The only difference due to these groupings was in the general learning strategies area of Metamotivation ( $F=2.82$ ,  $df=3/322$ ,  $p=.039$ ). Post hoc analysis with the Tukey disclosed that the group with the GPA of 3.06-3.46 relied upon this strategy area much more than the group with the GPA of 3.47-4.00.

Learning strategies differences were also explored in the nine major areas in which students concentrate their work: Business, University Transfer, College Prep, Computer Systems Technology (CST), Travel, Fine Arts, Nursing, Power

Engineering, and Rehabilitation Services. Several differences were found, and these were identified using the Tukey post hoc test. Nursing students used the metamotivation strategy of Attention ( $F=2.87$ ,  $df=8/313$ ,  $p=.004$ ) more than the CST, business, and university transfer students. The university transfer students use the metamotivation strategy of Reward/Enjoyment ( $F=2.65$ ,  $df=8/313$ ,  $p=.008$ ) less than the business, fine arts, and college prep students. The university transfer students also used the metamotivation strategy of Confidence ( $F=3.01$ ,  $df=8/313$ ,  $p=.003$ ) less than the business and fine arts students. The business students used the memory strategy of Using External Aids ( $F=2.75$ ,  $df=8/313$ ,  $p=.006$ ) more than the fine arts students. However, the business students used the resource management area of Critical Use of Resources ( $F=2.73$ ,  $df=8/313$ ,  $p=.006$ ) less than the college prep students. The university transfer students used the general learning strategies area of Metamotivation ( $F=4.39$ ,  $df=8/313$ ,  $p=.001$ ) less than the college prep, business, travel, nursing, and fine arts students. The rehabilitation services students use the learning strategies area of Resource Management ( $F=3.03$ ,  $df=8/313$ ,  $p=.003$ ) more than the business students.

Thus, numerous univariate analyses were conducted and found several differences in learning strategies among the sample depending upon how they were grouped. In addition, multivariate analysis using discriminant analysis was used to explore for distinct patterns of learning strategy application among the group. "Discriminant analysis is concerned with the grouping of people and with analyzing the interrelationship of multiple variables to determine if they can explain a person's placement in a specific group. Unlike univariate analyses which examine individual variables separately and allow them to be disassociated from the total person who is a synergistic composition of these various variables, discriminant analysis examines people on a set of variables to determine if any of them interact in a combination that can explain the person's placement in the group" (Conti, 1993, p. 91). As in Hill's study, students were grouped by GPA, and the individual learning strategies of SKILLS were used as the discriminating variables. The two groups used in the analysis were those who were in the highest and lowest 15% of the group; 15% corresponds with one standard deviation from the mean.

The discriminant analysis produced a function identified as Independent Formal Learners which distinguished the most successful students from the least successful students. The learning strategies in the structure matrix which were used for naming this function (Klecka, 1980, p. 31) were Using External Aids (.61), Testing Assumptions (.51), Identification of Resources (.48), and Organization (.46). The formula for the discriminant function was as follows:  $d = .22 (\text{Organization}) + .26 (\text{Using External Aids}) + .31 (\text{Testing Assumptions}) + .25 (\text{Identification of Resources}) - 8.94$ . However, this function was only 61% accurate and accounted for only 7.5% of the variance. Consequently, it is a weak function with limited use. Thus, the results of this discriminant analysis are very different from those of Hill's study with Native American learners in the tribal colleges which produced a strong function entitled Uncritical Acceptance.

## Conclusions

This study adds to the growing literature base on learning strategies. As with previous studies, SKILLS appears to be an effective instrument for identifying adult learning strategies. Numerous differences were found among the learners even



though strong patterns were not disclosed between the most and least successful groups of learners. Although some of the same factors were found as in the tribal college study, the results of the tribal college study are not generalizable to the Canadian college which has a different student than the tribal colleges.

The use of learning strategies is widely distributed. When looking at large groups, no single learning style area or specific learning strategy emerges as dominant. Instead, the preference for each of the strategies is normally distributed across the group. However, when smaller groups are examined, some patterns do begin to emerge. While a few differences were found with the groupings of gender, type of program, age, and academic level of achievement, the greatest amount of differences were uncovered when looking at the various areas of study. Just as Kolb (1974) found various learning styles associated with different professions, perhaps certain learning strategies are more useful in specific areas of study. Also as Kolb suggested, perhaps different academic areas draw unique types of learners. Regardless of the exact cause of these differences, educators need to be aware of these varying preferences of the learners and should use this knowledge to further learning for the students by reinforcing those the learner already has and teaching them how to use new strategies that would be useful in the area.

Although SKILLS is a useful instrument for measuring learning strategies, the six scenarios within each set do not share the same popularity with respondents. This indicates that the topics of the scenarios have difference relevancy to various participants. Moreover, the appeal to males and females differs among the scenarios. Since SKILLS is still a relatively new instrument, it may be appropriate to rethink the groupings of the scenarios. Although the original grouping of the scenarios was to provide a set with different levels of learning situations, it may be more appropriate for uses to make up their own set, which is appropriate for their audience, from the total pool of 12 scenarios. Indeed, the best use of the instrument may be in using it as a model with construct validity which can provide the generic format for scenarios and corresponding items which are specifically tailored for the group with which the instrument is to be used; this approach has been successfully used by McKenna (1991), Yabui (1992), and Moretti (1994).

The results of the Hill study are not generalizable to Medicine Hat College. Although both the tribal colleges of Montana and Medicine Hat College are two-year colleges located in the same region, the student composition of the colleges is drastically different. Whereas the tribal colleges contain a large number of Native American students, Medicine Hat College is overwhelmingly Caucasian students. Medicine Hat College is less rural than the tribal colleges. The students also have different learning strategies preferences. While some of the same strategies appeared in the final discriminant analysis in each of the studies, the results of these analyses were quite different. The strong discriminating function of Uncritical Acceptance was not present at the Canadian college. Instead, it was replaced with a weak function that does not greatly aid description of the differences between the most successful and least successful students at the college.

Colleges are capable of generating their own knowledge base. Before this research project, Medicine Hat College had depended on outside sources to provide its knowledge base. This project and the internal training sessions which accompanied it demonstrate that field-based case study research can be carried out with rigor and that it can provide a locally-generated research base for improving teaching and learning.



In addition to addressing the research questions related to learning strategies and to the learning patterns of culturally distinct groups, this research project sought to break down the artificial barriers created by internationalism. Although Alberta and Montana are adjacent and share many common characteristics, very little cooperation exists between the academic institutions of the two areas. This project refused to recognize the limitations imposed by the international border and involved the cooperative effort of the field-based resources of the Canadian college and the research resources of a US university. In addition to the successful completion of the research project, it has led to a jointly conducted training session for the college's faculty and to an ongoing research project which has been expanded to include the other two-year post-secondary institutions in Alberta.

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## **U. S. Educational Policy and Adult Education: Social Control; Social Demand; and Professional Adult Educator Participation**

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Adult educators lobby for adult education legislation often without a critical analysis of its intent. Federal legislation supporting adult education has increased markedly since 1964 as a response to popular sector demands with little involvement by the adult education profession. Increasingly, the professionals' interest has been limited to policies promoting the instrumental use of adult education often for narrow goals. This is not consistent with the democratic social agenda of many early U.S. adult educators.

Public policy resulting in federal funding of adult education has increased in size and in its application. Such legislation is often driven by two forces: pressure from the base out of popular sectors (AIDS education) and as a response of policy makers to perceived national threat (Americanization programs at the turn of the century). In 1964, starting with the great society program, legislation for adult education at the federal level has increased greatly. How has the demand for and the use of adult education supported by federal legislation changed? What has been the involvement of adult education and their professional associations in setting policy and for what purposes? To respond to these questions a broad search of federal legislation on adult education and its literature was conducted. Secondly, a selected number of laws were analyzed which fell into three categories depending on their goal: human capital formation, social equity, and support of popular movements. These laws are listed below.

### **Human Capital Formation:**

JOBS, Title II Family Support Act of 1988 (PL100-485)  
The National Literacy Act of 1991 (PL102-72)

### **Social Equity:**

Domestic Service Act of 1973: Volunteers in Service to America (PL103-82)  
National Endowment for the Humanities (PL89-209)

### **Support of Popular Movements:**

United States Institute of Peace (PL 98-525)  
Tribally Controlled Community College Assistance (PL95-471)  
Congress of the United States, Title 42 United States Code, the Public Health and Welfare Section 247C, Sexually Transmitted Diseases.

Each of the above laws were analyzed by studying the legislative process, the public hearings, and the congressional reports which addressed their enactment or reauthorization.

## **The Historical Context**

Historically, one can see legislation in which the federal policy makers responded to popular demands. For example the Land Grant College and the Cooperative Extension Service legislation was enacted in a large part due to the pressures from farmers mobilized to make the university accessible to ordinary citizens (Rasmussen). In like manner, the Freedmen's Bureau and later the Historic Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) were provided federal funds in part because of the political pressure from former slaves, free negroes and liberal white supporters (Roebuck and Marty).

On the other hand some decisions to educate adults were initiated by national leaders in order to avoid a national threat. Education of conscripts for the military in order to recruit needed soldiers was done in the Civil War, as well as, World War I and II (Ulin). During the depression years, President Roosevelt's WPA and federal relief policy funded large scale adult education classes as well as involving adults in popular history, art and cultural programs. A major purpose of this legislation was to provide employment for out of work teachers, artists and historians as well as activities for the unemployed so as to ward off the appeal of socialism. Accordingly, when the emergency was over the government ended these programs.

From 1964 to 1994, however, a different pattern of funding and policy making seems to have evolved. The federal government is now legitimated to support and develop adult education on a sustained basis both to respond to increasingly diverse social movements, as well as for the more narrow interests of business and industry to increase the economic vitality of the nation. The latter broadly has as its policy goal domestication of the work force in terms of the criterion of productivity.

Another aspect of the legislative study was to analyze the role of professional adult educators in the creation of public policy. Clearly the early exemplars of adult education such as Eduard Lindeman, Marcus Garvey, Jane Addams, Alain Locke and their later followers in the professorate Paul Sheats, Howard McClusky, Edwin Hamilton, Scipio A. J. Colin III were concerned with and buoyed by the utility of adult education as a way to create not only more enlightened citizens, but also to bring about a democratic more egalitarian society. These humanists and socialists were gradually replaced by adult educators with a growing concern for professionalism and equipped with a growing technology of theories of learning, instruction, program planning, evaluation and the administration of its practice. The result was the defining of the field of adult education more and more in terms of institutional goals and a practice that moved away from popular social movements championing democratic social change. Educators of adults and volunteers working with the popular sector and in these sites of contestation were gradually excised from the field of adult education as defined by professionals. Rubenson (1989) estimated the drop in voluntary sponsorship to be 27 percent since the early sixties. Thus the social upheavals following 1964, as seen in the civil rights movement, the women's movement, the ecology movement, the peace movement, the community-based (popular education) movement, and the anti poverty movement appeared to have had little impact on most professional adult educators whose primary reference point appeared to be their professional associations and their institutional base. Thus

Quigley (1990) notes two camps within the Commission of Professors of Adult Education (CPAE): the professionalizers and the social changers who talk past one another. For though the field is dominated by professionalizers there has always been a number of proponents for social change within the professional associations, but their number currently is small.

### **Human Capital Formation**

The increase in adult education as federal policy has been well documented in the area of human capital formation ("Financing the Learning Society," Alamprese and Sivilli, Office of Technology Assessment). Depending on the source that is used, the human capital programs are littered throughout the federal bureaucracy (85 programs in 12 agencies studied by Alamprese and Sivilli with more than \$247 million expended in 1992). Christoffel using a more extended definition of adult education placed the figure of federal spending for the education of adults at \$14 billion in 1976 in over 270 federal programs in 29 cabinet level departments and agencies (Financing the Learning Society). It is the remedial programs, especially the Adult Education Act, which have captured the interest of professional adult educators and on which they have researched and written. A notable exception of a broader interest was exemplified in the 1987 Lifelong Learning Act which had many professional's interest but was never funded (Hoffman).

Even though we have seen the longest sustained period of federal funding of literacy and basic education, the conceptualization of literacy has narrowed. Ratcliff (1985) describes the passion of Carl Perkins and his vision of bringing civic and economic enlightenment to the Appalachian poor. It was the Committee of 100, a small literacy advocacy group in the Adult Education Association, who in the early sixties renamed literacy adult basic education or ABE, after Abraham (Abe) Lincoln. They put forward a strong metaphor of citizenship and leadership by choosing a man who, through education, went from adult illiteracy to be president and the architect of the Emancipation Proclamation. Now ABE has become linked to the human capital formation metaphor and the ideal of the enlightened citizen has been reduced to learning for earning (Weber, Baptiste).

The American Association for Adult Continuing Education's (AAACE) legislative agenda has focused almost exclusively on adult education for human capital formation. AAACE, as the association's new name implies, supports a new definition distinguishing between adult education as contrasted to continuing education; the former remedial, the latter professional upgrading. These new definitions which separate education essentially by social class are strongly linked to a developing discourse framed by technology on institutionalization, credit, standards, certification, all of which enjoyed strong political advocacy within the association. It wasn't until 1992, when Sheared, with an Afrocentric feminist epistemology in her research, makes the case that the JOBS program was about domestication of mothers receiving public assistance and that contrary to the historic ideal that adult educators should have been active to help women on welfare find their voice and participate in policy making, adult educators were absent as advocates in a policy discourse which was laced with racism, sexism, and classism (Sheared).



## **Social Equity**

Let us turn to legislation focusing on social equity, such as Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and examine the extent to which the adult education professional was involved. It has been community based adult educators, rather than institutional adult educators who have utilized VISTA as an instrument to hook up the middle class and the poor often through community action programs. This linking provided a vertical mix of social class experiences which educated those involved in the critical analysis of the conditions under which the poor must survive. Some argue that any society needs these linking mechanisms to both educate citizens and provide for social integration. More recently with Reagan's emphasis on voluntarism in literacy, professional adult educators, especially those in voluntary literacy programs have been actively involved in amending VISTA. Previously VISTA volunteers worked as workers in poor communities, often as activists fighting poverty. Under Reagan, this policy was changed so that literacy volunteers were a part of VISTA often working inside institutions with a more cognitive definition of literacy.

Clearly NEH was the result of advocacy by university humanists. However, this new 1968 program enlisted adult educators to shape the civic and culturally contextualized programs which were to be based in the communities and make explicit issues of race, class and gender. Hiring a professional adult educator to head the state based program, Len Oliver, in various roles at NEH, for eleven years labored to get adult education professionals interested in facilitating community problem solving, civic education (such as the Centennial celebration), the American Issues Forum, and workers education with only minimal success. With the neo-conservative ascendancy, William Bennett as the new chair of NEH informed Oliver that his type of advocacy for those weaker popular sectors was no longer a goal of NEH (Oliver). Bennett (1992) argued that the government should not be legislating a political grass roots advocacy but return NEH resources to the scholars in the university. What was the response to Bennett's actions from AAACE, CPAE, or the National University Continuing Education Association? None that I could find.

## **Support of Popular Movements**

Finally we examine the social demand of popular movements and their advocacy for adult education. The Tribally Controlled Community College (TCCC) Act is an example of a social movement, Native American self determination, and its struggle for federal support to control their own schools. Their political activity started in 1968 culminating in the passage of the TCCC Act in 1988. In 1994, thirty one Tribal Colleges, in the tradition of HBCU's, represent one of the most exciting experiments in community and culturally focused adult education which explicitly articulates the relationship of race, class, and gender to poverty. Lindeman would have approved; Myles Horton did his last work in Montana with the TCCC's prior to his death (Cunningham). But outside of Gary Conti and Robert Felenz at Montana State University, most adult education professors have little, if anything to say or do, if indeed they are even knowledgeable about this exciting and vibrant adult education activity. Does the deficiency discourse of the ABE poor have more allure to professionals than the self determination discourse of the poor in the Native



American social movement? Which discourse speaks best to adult education for democracy? This is the debate that informs policy.

Another piece of legislation, the 1984 National Institute for Peace with its annual budget of \$12 million for education, grew out of a popular movement. Since 1935 peace educators have struggled to get a Peace Academy to promote peace education even as federal policy supports a War College and a vast educational agenda to promote the military and its activities. The CPAE did endorse this legislative policy through a letter of support because of the efforts of Roger Axford but the support was luke warm (Cunningham). Budd Hall, a Canadian and Helen Kekona, a Finn have tried with little success to interest U.S. adult educators in peace education. The International Council for Adult Education has Peace and Human Rights as one of its four major objectives.

The AAACE has responded in a measured way to social activists. The Salt Lake City "Trail" convention found the association guilty of "negligence regarding the social action focus inherent in the mission and tradition of adult education" (Quigley, 1991, p. 21). Heikki Leskinen and John Holden took the leadership with Adult Learning to devote an issue to Peace Education (September, 1991) but there has been little response generally among professional adult educators to this social movement. On the other hand, since 1989, Jeannette Smith, Editor of Adult Learning has worked to represent the field broadly. Accordingly, there have been several issues of the journal which has addresses social concerns, e.g. women, the poor, multiculturalism (Smith).

Another social demand studied was the education of U.S. citizens about AIDS, an issue arising from the work of gay activists, which has been almost ignored by professional adult educators with the exceptions of Boshier (1990, 1991) and Clemens (1991). In fact, because of social stigma, AIDS education funded by federal policy has had to be done surreptitiously through the Sexually Transmitted Disease provision of Public Health Legislation. According to Clemens, the education of adults about a disease which is potentially pandemic has been carried out most vigorously by the gay press and to a far lesser extent, the mainstream press. One reference in AAACE's journal Adult Learning about AIDS came from then President, William S. Griffith. He opined in a two edged argument that professional adult educators should learn from gay activists about legislative advocacy since they had successfully obtained a disproportionate amount of dollars for AIDS research and education than could be logically justified by the number of person afflicted. This is hardly leadership advocacy in support of what appears to AIDS health experts as a pressing social demand for adult health education.

## Conclusion

Federal policies relating to the education of adults has increased in numbers and in kind. The 1964 War on poverty legislation appears to have begun a new period. That is to say, legislation affecting adult education which had in the past been transitory and usually remedial now appears to be permanent and found increasingly in many governmental offices besides the Department of Education. The current 1994 "Contract with America" and the popular movement for smaller government

may signal another change, but the years 1964 to 94 can be characterized by growth and diversity.

Adult educators were found to be most active, both legislatively and in conducting research, on policies affecting adult basic education, especially the Adult Education Act. Quigley's observation that the CPAE is deeply divided by those interested in professionalizing the field and those interested in promoting social change probably extends into the larger professional bodies such as AAACE. Clearly there has been evidence of social concern beginning to be evidenced in their journal for practitioners, Adult Learning. However this interest in social change is more recent and is clearly not the dominant ethos of the association as seen in their journals, their conventions or in the interest of their members in policy formation. The legislation examined which concerned equity issues was found to have little support from the professional groups. In the case of NEH, even with the strong efforts of a professional adult educator, little interest was shown for civic education, community problem solving, and the gate opening efforts to involve the weaker sectors of society in the public discourse. In another case, when Reagan could not end VISTA, he changed its direction. Some adult literacy educators were activity involved in moving VISTA volunteers into institutionally sponsored literacy programs and in so doing many were moved away from community action programs for the poor.

The examination of legislation supporting popular social movements showed only minimal interest of the professional associations. Peace education, and Native American self determination social movements engaged professional adult educators only tangentially in practice and almost never legislatively. The AIDS social movement promoting research and education, not only was ignored by the professional adult educators with one or two exceptions, but also was seemingly utilized in a disparaging way by the President of the AAACE. But adult education is alive and well in the popular sectors and legislative policy is developed regularly in support of adult education though these activists would not necessarily identify themselves as professional adult educators.

Legislation, especially in the human capital formation arena, is where professional adult educators are most active politically. These legislative programs are about increasing productivity in the work place and this discourse is so strong that the professional associations and its members have seemingly lost the vision of building a strong inclusive participative democracy without regard to race, gender, and class to a Marcusian one dimensional analysis. This analysis denies that adult education can be a site of contestation and a place to promote the development of human agency for a more democratic society. One must conclude that adult education in this period is about professionalism and reproducing the society as is and that adult educators have failed to effect policy development at the federal level with the goal of encouraging democratic social change.

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## THE IDENTIFICATION, ASSESSMENT AND IMPLICATIONS OF AN ORGANIZATION'S LEARNING SYSTEM FOR THE PRACTICE OF ADULT EDUCATION IN ORGANIZATIONAL SETTINGS

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### Abstract:

Traditional approaches to adult learning in organizational settings concentrate on the individual rather than the organizational setting. This study focused on the organizational context for adult learning in the workplace. We present the background that led up to the study, the purpose of the research, the conceptual framework, the methodology and findings. Implications for practice and research conclude the article.

### Background, Purpose and Conceptual Framework

In most organizations, adult learning is synonymous with planned training programs designed to assess and eliminate an individual's skill deficit (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991). Theories about learning in organizational settings are often behavioristic and functionalistic with a focus on individual performance (Boshier, 1994; Elias & Merriam, 1980; Marsick, 1987). A common criticism of this approach, as it pertains to learning in organizations, is its focus on the individual separated from the broader social context. Recently interest in context as a key factor in learning has increased. Jarvis (1987) holds that "learning is not just a psychological process that happens in splendid isolation from the world in which the learner lives, but that it is intimately related to the world and affected by it" (p. 11). Effective learning is situated, that is embedded in the context in which it occurs. As Wilson (1993) says: "...context is not just an important element in thinking about human learning but is perhaps central to our understanding of adult cognition" (p. 72). Pre-packaged materials, delivered apart from the authentic needs and interests of adult learners have limited effectiveness (Soifer, Irwin, Crumrine, Honzaki, Simmons & Young, 1990). Many learners in the workplace are "context-dependent" (Zuboff, 1988). According to Marsick & Watkins (1990), the organizational setting or context is a key ingredient of learning experience.

A fundamental problem for adult educators and other practitioners working in organizational settings is to accurately identify meaningful contextual factors that influence the learning process. An organization's learning system, first identified by Argyris and Schön (1978), provides a framework for considering these factors. An organization's learning system is the aggregate of the activities, structures and customs within the organization that promote or impede learning on individual, group and organizational levels. For most organizations, this system is more implicit than explicit and, therefore, is rarely subject to scrutiny or improvement (Marsick and Watkins, 1990). By identifying the components of an organization's learning system, adult educators can plan more effective learning programs and ultimately recommend ways an organization can improve its learning system.

The purpose of this research was to identify the main components of an organization's learning system and the factors in each of those components that



promote or impede learning. A secondary purpose was to develop and test a qualitative process for identifying an organization's learning system.

A conceptual framework for the study was developed based on the authors' findings in the Tennessee Workforce Learning Project, a demonstration project in workforce basic skills conducted by the authors and sponsored by the Tennessee Department of Adult and Community Education during 1992-1993. This framework was then enhanced from the adult education literature and the literature on organizational learning, specifically the works of Argyris & Schön (1978); Dixon (1992); Jarvis (1987); Pedler, Burgoyne & Boydell (1991); Marsick (1987); Schein, 1992; Senge (1990); & Watkins & Marsick (1993).

### Methodology

**Sample:** A convenience sample of organizations was selected for ease of access, diversity of organizational type, and their participation in a larger community development initiative emphasizing learning. Data were collected from fifteen organizations (nine private sector businesses, two public sector government agencies and four educational organizations) in a rural Tennessee county. These organizations ranged in size from 28 to 4000 employees. Represented in the sample were basic manufacturing, high-tech manufacturing, high-tech communications, textile manufacturing, law enforcement, health care, and schools. The sample also included administrative offices of local government, the school system, law enforcement and community development.

A convenience sample of individuals was selected at each site. Participants in the study were selected by researchers in conversation with managers, supervisors and employees. Participation in the study was voluntary and all responses were treated as confidential. Participants in the study included 15 senior managers, 30 managers, 62 supervisors, 79 staff, and 444 hourly workers. All participants were permanent employees present at the organization on the date data were gathered.

**Data collection:** The study made use of a variety of qualitative data collection methods. Interviews and focus groups were conducted with selected individuals from a cross section of levels, departments and functions within each organization (a total of 29 focus groups and 55 interviews for the entire study). In addition, the Learning System Questionnaire was administered either to all employees who were present or to a large sample of employees. Researcher observations and memo records were compiled for each site. Instruments used to collect data were developed from the literature and the results of the authors' research as a part of the Tennessee Workforce Learning Project. The questionnaire and interview guides were evaluated by subject matter experts and tested at two independent worksites for clarity and effectiveness. The questionnaire was used as a qualitative instrument designed to add richness to the data. Data were gathered over a two day period at each site by one or two researchers. The qualitative methods used were designed to provide both descriptive richness and quantitative specificity across a broad cross section of the organizations studied.

**Data analysis:** The data were analyzed using a method of open coding. Initial codes were tested, revised and compared within different data samples from each site. Matrices for conceptual clustering were developed which greatly facilitated the



comparison of data across departments and organizations. The codes that emerged from the data were compared with the conceptual framework that shaped the study. Variations were noted which sometimes led to new codes and additional comparisons. After data were collected for each of the fifteen sites individually a cross-site analysis was conducted. While the learning system components that emerged from the data were similar to the researcher's original conceptual framework, the data contributed to expanded definitions and descriptions of the original components as well as definitive indicators. In addition, new components found only in the data were added to the conceptual framework.

**Validation:** Results from the analysis of the data were presented in the form of a verbal and written report, to representatives of the organization who were asked to review and verify the findings. In some cases the report was shared with all employees; in other cases only a portion of the workforce heard or saw the report. Few discrepancies were noted. Collective results from all fifteen participating organizations were presented to representatives from participating organizations for verification. Subsequent to this study, the research process developed in this study was conducted at two additional sites, geographically removed from the sites of the original study. The results were consistent with this study.

### Findings

Findings from the study identified six key components of an organization's learning system that can either promote or impede learning: 1) capacity, 2) configuration, 3) customs, 4) communication, 5) collaboration, and 6) competencies.

**Capacity** is an organization's ability to create opportunities for learning. Capacity includes interest, budget, opportunity and resources for learning. In one small manufacturing site, there was high interest in learning but no room where a learning event could take place with more than four people. In most small organizations, especially in the private sector, there is no formal budget for learning or education. Time was identified by most organizations as the single most important resource impeding learning.

**Configuration** refers to the ways an organization's structures, policies and mission support learning. Configuration includes organizational structures that contribute to learning. In most public sector organizations, an individual was responsible for training and development. In some manufacturing companies, supervisors commonly withheld knowledge as a way to protect their jobs; in others knowledge was shared freely. Companies that had policies that rewarded learning were more likely to have individuals involved in learning activities. Systematic methods for recording learning allowed individuals and departments to learn from one another. This study found a scarcity of intentional systems for planning, monitoring and remembering learning in organizational settings.

**Customs** include habits and attitudes that support or impede learning. Organizational customs are learned and over time and eventually become tacit or unconscious. Habits include ways individuals respond to questions, mistakes, explanations, problems and decisions. Attitudes that support learning include a

willingness to assist coworkers; trust between individuals and groups; the organization's positive attitude toward individuals; and the individual's positive attitude toward the organization. Customs were found to play a large, yet subtle, role in participation, planning and effective implementation of organizational learning strategies.

**Communication** involves the effectiveness of the organization's interdepartmental and interpersonal information flow. Most employees cited difficulties in communication as the most serious problem they face. Poor communication was said to slow production and service. Many hourly employees said they did not have the information they needed to do their jobs. Especially lacking were effective skills in giving and receiving feedback. Without feedback, several people reported that they did not know what they were supposed to learn. Few individuals said they knew whether they were doing a good job. Communication among departments and sites was also described as poor to nonexistent.

**Collaboration** involves interdepartmental cooperation and teamwork. Closely related to communication, collaboration is collective involvement in purposeful activity, including the sharing of meaningful information. Although most respondents praised collaboration as a foundation of learning, there was very little evidence of collaboration in practice. In some sites, departments were just beginning to consider collaborative activities. In one factory, a cross-functional, multilevel team was redesigning work space. In other sites, departments hoarded information, considering themselves in an adversarial relationship with other departments. It was not uncommon in these sites for an individual to say, "I did my job, now it's up to them." Collaboration, when effective, was reported to be the most powerful component of the organization's learning system.

**Competency** includes the skills individuals need to perform their jobs. Competency includes knowing what skills are necessary to do a job and establishing ways to determine if an individual possesses the necessary skills. Respondents reported that the jobs in their organization changed rapidly. While many were certain that the competency requirements were changing, there was system to identify and plan for new competency requirements. Definitions and measurements of competency, in most of the organizations studied, were either subjective or very narrowly focused.

Two additional factors emerged as critical in the identification and optimization of an organization's learning system. **Change** refers to the intensity, pervasiveness and consistency of change within the organization. A moderate level of change stimulated learning. An excessive level of change caused so much anxiety that learning was virtually blocked. Manufacturing organizations reported the greatest degree of change, including changes in customer demands and technology. Two factories in our sample were installing machines that would fundamentally change the way work was done in those sites. Computers rather than people would be operating machines. Technology dramatically affected the public sector also. Law enforcement officers were required to make computer generated reports on a daily basis. In most sites, education and training did not keep pace with demands for change.

A second factor that impacted an organization's learning system was the wider community and industry **context**. Many of the organizations we studied were owned or controlled from other locations. All were affected by factors beyond their organizational boundaries. Yet little attention was paid to the potential impact of these outside factors. For example, in the rural area we studied, the high school graduates with the highest grades left the area leaving a pool of workers who were often at the lower end of the educational achievement spectrum. This had an impact on the training requirements of what manufacturers called "new hires," yet there was no dialogue between the employers and the high schools or vocational schools.

### The Research Process

Respondents in most organizations said the process of engaging in the research process was as valuable as the results. Even though all respondents said learning was essential to the organization's survival, it was uncommon for respondents in the organizations we studied to focus intentionally on learning in their organizations. It was also uncommon for managers, supervisors, and hourly workers to participate in a project together. Learning from this study seemed to cut across traditional organizational boundaries. Respondents reported increased levels of communication and collaboration in the organizations that participated in the study. Participating organizations from different sectors and industries were surprised at the similarities in their learning system problems.

The conceptual framework developed from this research is continuing to be tested in organizations. The research resulted in an assessment process called the *Learning System Analysis for Organizations*.

### Summary and Significance

The concept of an organizational learning system provides a lens for both educators and organizations to understand the impact of organizational context on adult learning in organizational settings. Individuals do not learn in isolation; context plays an important role in determining the effectiveness of learning activities. Adult educators will be better equipped to practice in organizational settings if they can identify and describe the organization's learning system. Our study supports the importance of addressing the organization's learning system before designing a workplace learning program.

Similarly, organizations who say their survival depends on the ability of their members to learn, must understand what organizational factors contribute to that learning and be willing to address those that impede learning and enhance those that promote learning. It is too easy to blame organizational problems on the so-called deficits of the workers. It is much more challenging to examine how the organizational context promotes or impedes learning. Also important are the contextual factors that lay beyond the organization's boundaries.

This study is only a beginning for understanding the complexities of an organization's learning system. The study was limited in many ways. It was not possible to select a random sample. Responses were subjective. Specific learning activities were not addressed. The study focused primarily on individual adult learning. It is possible that respondents reported what they thought the researchers

wanted to hear. However, the data is strongly suggestive of organizational, contextual factors that promote or impede learning.

In order to develop effective learning programs and strategies for organizations, adult educators need assessment tools that are systematic and grounded in theory and practice. The findings from this study contribute to the ongoing process of developing and testing assessment tools. This study supports the data indicating that the strength of learning in organizational settings is in the process of learning itself in a social context as well as the content. Further research focusing on the occurrence and interrelationships of the components of the organizational learning system is indicated. Helping an organization identify its learning system is itself a learning process for all involved; fundamentally about awareness, reflection, dialogue, and making meaning.

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## PERCEPTIONS OF ADULT LITERACY POLICY AND PRACTICE: A SURVEY OF LEADERS IN THE FIELD

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**Abstract:** Research encompassed 115 interviews of key opinion leaders in surveying perceptions of adult literacy policy and practice, with special focus on the period surrounding passage of the National Literacy Act of 1991.

**Introduction:** There has been much discussion regarding the effectiveness of policies and programs related to adult literacy education, yet there has been little organized research to gain insights from those who are either experts in the field or in a position to leverage policy. This research advances understanding and identifies potential solutions to persistent problems in the field through the eyes of those best positioned to influence key decision making.

**Theoretical Framework:** Individuals at different points in a system can have very different views of what is occurring, what is needed, and what works. This research includes the perspectives of many primary researchers, practitioners, and leaders who are influencing the adult literacy field.

Two major clusters of interviews were conducted, each with a series of research objectives in mind. The initial series of interviews, conducted in 1992, were designed to gauge sentiments regarding an array of adult literacy related topics. They included: Human Capital versus Individual Development themes, top problem areas confronting adult literacy education, identification of principal discrepancies between practice and instructional theory, barriers to better practice, trends in federal government involvements, potential value of technology-based instruction and family literacy programs, adequacy of citizenship education programs, suggestions for rewriting policies and redesigning programs for improved efficiency, and perceived potential of the National Literacy Act of 1991. This interview series was well timed to probe early perceptions of the National Institute for Literacy as it was ultimately framed by the legislation.

The concluding cluster of interviews occurred in 1994 and was designed around three time dimensions. The first time frame was the period ranging from the formative period of the early 1980's to issuance of the Jump Start report authored by Forrest Chisman in January 1989. The second time zone dealt with the legislative process, extending from issuance of the Jump Start report until passage of the National Literacy Act in July 1991. The final time zone extended until the present in chronicling perceptions related to the effectiveness of implementation strategies tied to the legislation.

While the two slates of interviewees overlapped, enabling a view of shifting perceptions of the same individual over time, they were also distinctive. The earlier slate was weighted in the direction of in-depth expertise in the adult literacy field.



While the second interview slate also had strong texture in the same direction, it included many more individuals who could be viewed as political power brokers.

Collectively, the interviews provide a wide ranging and diverse mosaic of perceptions of the adult literacy field and the dynamics over a period of roughly 15 years, with special focus on the sea change in public opinion that manifested itself in the late 1980's and early 1990's.

**Methods/technologies:** A large number of opinion leaders/literary experts were interviewed in-depth (1992-94). The list is a veritable "Who's Who" in literacy, to include Former First Lady Barbara Bush, Harold McGraw of McGraw-Hill, who created the Business Council for Effective Literacy (BCEL), Congressman Thomas Sawyer (D-Ohio), who sponsored the National Literacy Act on the House-side, Rich Long of the International Reading Association, Peter Waite of Laubach Literacy, Forrest Chisman, who authored the Jump Start report, Roger Porter, who served as Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy and a variety of other federal, state, private sector and community-based organization leaders.

Using Force Field Analysis (Kurt Lewin), a variation of Perspective Discrepancy Assessment (Teachers College, Columbia University) and sophisticated coding structures, perceptions were triangulated in a variety of ways to provide a perceptions-driven overview of emerging issues and problems that confront our national adult literacy programming/policies.

**Data Source:** One hundred and fifteen (115) in-depth interviews were conducted, using a Delphi technique to identify the list of foremost opinion leaders in the area of adult literacy. Both slates of interviews were identified, purified and validated through input from interviewees them-selves. Each interviewee was informed of other individuals on the list at the time they were interviewed. They invariably knew who had performed in critical roles. As interviews proceeded, it became like an evolving sociogram, diagramming the network of connections. Many names surfaced repeatedly, lending added credence to selection of these individuals for interview.

**Findings:** The findings are divided into two sets. The first addresses perceptions related to the initial cluster of interviews (1992) and the second covers perceptions linked to the concluding cluster of interviews (1994). Because of the richness of the research base only a sampling of the more significant findings are provided.

#### Findings: Initial Interview Cluster

1. In terms of relative weight assigned to Human Capital as contrasted with Human Development themes, 57 percent of interviewees indicated a balanced view, with the remainder equally divided between the two perspectives. Federal officials were most inclined to address adult literacy in Human Capital terms.
2. Sixty-nine percent of interviewees ended up identifying one of three problem areas as utmost in importance. Heading the list was the need for greater professionalization of staff involved with adult literacy education. Need for higher

quality delivery systems ranked second and better research, information and standards ranked third. Only three of 22 federal-level interviewees perceived professionalization of staff to be a problem, significantly lower than found with state-level and private sector interviewees.

3. When asked to identify the "single greatest discrepancy", the way success is measured and goals are set ranked number one.

4. Fifty-six percent of the interviewees indicated that federal programs should be better integrated, whereas 26 percent considered dispersion of adult literacy programs over a variety of agencies to be a good thing (e.g., more avenues for access).

5. Two-thirds believed the federal role in adult literacy should be increased. This was particularly true of the private sector. Paradoxically, many interviewees saw the locus of public policy shifting to the states.

6. Thirty percent assigned high potential to the National Literacy Act of 1991. Forty percent of federal-level interviewees had no opinion, four times as many as state-level and private sector.

7. Slightly over one-half saw high potential value in use of technology-based literacy instruction. Family literacy was viewed as having high potential by 57 percent of those interviewed, making it the program area with the greatest perceived potential.

8. Over one-half of the interviewees found citizenship education to be inadequate.

#### Findings: Concluding Interview Cluster (1994)

1. There was widespread disillusionment with the National Institute for Literacy in terms of slowness in getting it established, lack of focus and early staff expertise. The Bush Administration received low marks in terms of it's actions to make the Institute a reality. Appointment of Andrew Hartman as first permanent director was viewed as a hopeful sign.

2. An extraordinary coalition was created in support of the legislative initiative but much of it has since dissolved.

3. Barbara Bush was far and away viewed as the most critical driving force in elevating awareness about literacy.

4. The Jump Start Report of 1989, authored by Forrest Chisman, had immense influence and provided the fundamental blueprint for legislation. It is viewed as a classic in its clarity and functionality in linking problems to solutions.

5. Important initiatives were begun in the Reagan years but were not visible as federal budget items. They involved activation and engineering of existing federal programs in concert with private sector capital.

6. The National Literacy Act provides a much needed infrastructure, even though associated funding is viewed as grossly inadequate.

7. During the late 1980's, a diverse coalition of literacy related experts and associations banded together to mobilize support for legislative initiatives. It was notable by the absence of parochialism. As the legislation crystallized, issues of "turf" re-emerged.

8. The White House was more supportive of legislation than it received credit for, but it was juggling a number of budget priorities and the National Literacy legislation had come to be seen as a Democratic initiative.

9. Collaboration between the federal agencies in the area of literacy has been somewhat strengthened under the current administration, particularly as concerns Education, Labor and Health and Human Services. However, adult literacy continues to get insufficient visibility from a public policy standpoint. The overwhelming focus continues to be K-12.

10. A number of interviewees commented on how issues of who wins, who loses and Washington politics tended to move the legislation into the arena of political expediency versus focus on the core needs the legislation was designed to meet and how best to integrate them.

11. Without the efforts of Senator Paul Simon (D-Illinois) and Congressman Tom Sawyer (D-Ohio), there would have been no National Literacy Act.

12. There is doubt and a "wait-and-see" attitude regarding the outcome of the reauthorization of the National Literacy Act in 1995.

Conclusions: The conclusions are distilled from a review of all interviews.

1. There is insufficient capacitzation of systems related to delivery of adult literacy and basic skills.
2. Lifelong learning emphasis is lacking.
3. There has been an absence of vision, both globally and in relation to specific needs of various adult populations (e.g., immigrants).
4. There is a need to better understand what works for specific groups of learners.
5. Social change needs to be a fundamental underpinning of adult literacy and basic skills.

Recommendations: The essence of what interviewees recommended in the way of public policy is listed below, limited to their foremost recommendations.

1. Create comprehensive delivery systems.
2. Emphasize lifelong learning approaches.
3. Promote learner centered adult education.
4. Enhance coordination/integration of systems.
5. Facilitate access of those in need.
6. Better match needs and resources.
7. Build adequacy of staff.
8. Increase workplace learning focus.
9. Improve understanding of adult literacy and its complexity.
10. Emphasize private sector and community involvement.

Significance to the Field: This is an exhaustive compilation of what influential people believe about Adult Literacy Education policies. Because the Adult Education Act is up for reauthorization in 1995, along with the Vocational Education and Technology Act (Carl Perkins), it is critical that adult educators be cognizant of the issues and problems surrounding the effective delivery of adult literacy programming.

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## Opening the Black Box: Toward a Field Systems Approach to the Study of Teaching in Adult Education

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This paper reports the development and implementation of a contextually driven research methodology for studying the process of teaching within adult education settings. The significance and theoretical basis for this approach, as well as a detailed description of the analytic system and its potential applications for research and practice are discussed.

### Statement of the Problem

Teaching adults is a challenging and complex activity, laden with uncertainty and ambiguity, and is frequently emotional and intuitive (Brookfield, 1990). Even the term itself evokes considerable ambivalence among many practitioners and scholars and writing and research on teaching adults tends to reflect these tensions. While the field is not at a loss for practical guidebooks on teaching adults, the vast majority of these works are derived largely from the authors' experiences and not from systematic research (Hayes, 1993). Numerous scholars have set forth philosophical, conceptual, or prescriptive models of teaching adults (Brookfield, 1986) but relatively few have conducted empirical studies. The empirical studies that have been reported reveal a multi-dimensional and epistemologically diverse approach to understanding this complex endeavor. One of the most prominent themes evident in this literature is devoted to the identification and description of traits and attributes of effective teachers (Brookfield, 1986; Galbraith, 1990). A small but growing number of studies focus on how teachers think about what they do, including conceptions of teaching (Beno, 1994; Dirkx & Prenger, 1994; Pratt, 1992), and teacher beliefs (Dirkx, & Fonfara, 1993; Kreber, 1994; Scott, Chovanec, & Young, 1993) and implicit theories (Dirkx & Spurgin, 1992). Far fewer studies, however, attempt to study the actions and behaviors of teachers within naturalistic learning settings. Examples include the study of congruence of classroom actions with beliefs and philosophies (Kreber, 1994), the relationship of teacher behaviors to student behaviors (Dirkx, 1986), and the effects of teaching actions or strategies on various student outcomes (Dirkx & Crawford, 1993).

Taken as a whole, conceptual and empirical studies within adult education have significantly contributed to our knowledge and understanding of teaching adults. Yet there is the sense that they fail to grasp the complexity that is inherent in the teaching process (Hayes, 1993). Most significant among these studies is the dearth of empirical studies on the actions and behaviors teachers use when working with adult learners. Scholars have dubbed teaching-learning interactions as the "black box" of education because so little is known about what happens within specific educational settings and contexts or why.

### Significance of the Research

The study of teaching adults clearly needs a methodological approach that is capable of capturing much more of the complexity of teachers' actions and events and which is capable of reflecting the contextually, specific, craft-like knowledge that teachers



apparently use to guide their practices (Brookfield, 1990; Tom & Valli, 1990). Existing approaches to the empirical study of teaching are being increasingly challenged by several prominent concerns. Many of the quantitative approaches have been too narrowly focused in their attempts to pull particular variables of interest out of a larger, more complex interactive field. This process isolates the variables from their particular contexts and tends to view other interactions as extraneous, often resulting in incomplete and inaccurate descriptions of the teaching process. Quantitative systems that are more inclusive have been viewed, until now, as much too time-consuming and virtually prohibitive as either a research or training approach. Despite their growing popularity in adult education research, qualitative methods and empirical approaches grounded in critical theory do not provide a consistent and reliable metric across observers, even if the work is situationally specific. As a result, it has been difficult to develop a robust description of teaching across various instructional settings.

In summary, adult education research has broached the "why we do what we do in instruction" question. What is not well developed, however, is a literature which describes or structurally maps and functionally analyzes the relationships among the many factors operating in teaching-learning environments that may vary in their quality and effectiveness. This methodological approach provides a basis for contributing to this kind of literature.

#### Theoretical Framework

Much of the literature that is concerned with the preparation of teachers has focused primarily on the development and maintenance of *effectiveness*. Recent work, however, has called for an exploration of how we can prepare teachers for instructional *expertise* (Berliner, in press; Ericsson & Smith, 1991; O'Sullivan & Doutis, 1994; Sharpe & Hawkins, 1992; Sharp, Lounsberry, & Bahls, invited submission). Field systems analysis provides one approach for conceptualizing teaching in a way that provides systematic study of how teachers acquire expertise. Furthermore, this framework provides a basis for developing training programs which foster the development of this expertise through deliberate practice. In contrast to linear, mechanical thinking in educational research, the field perspective views natural events not as pieces which are held together by some form of causal glue but as integrated wholes. Description is the source of explanation, rather than an intermediate step in the process of understanding (Delprato, 1991). In the study of teaching, field systems analysis involves a tripartite approach: (a) describing (b) multiple concurrent factors (c) in real time (Sharpe & Hawkins, 1990).

A systems orientation seems particularly compatible with the naturally interactive and complex nature of teaching adults in naturalistic settings, offering several advantages over qualitative and other traditional behavioral approaches. A field systems approach provides for a systemic or holistic view of the teaching situation. It identifies when in the teaching situation particular events of interest occur and how long they last. The approach is highly inductive, allowing for fine grained analysis of observable events specific to each particular setting. The temporal dilemmas of traditional behavioral analysis are avoided by an emphasis on streams or chains of events. The lack of objectivity and inherently value-laden properties of ethnography remain in check, while exploiting inductive forms of description. The field systems perspective provides a basis for identifying expertise among teachers of adults, for providing a better understanding of how that expertise

is acquired, and building a sense of how we can structure training and continuing education programs to foster expertise among teachers of adults.

Preliminary studies of this approach within teacher education provide support for the importance of providing specific continual feedback to teachers on their instructional actions and events. Our approach is grounded in two important assumptions. First, enhancement of our understanding and the improvement of the teaching of adults rests with a qualitative elaboration of categories of event that are meaningful and important to specific teaching contexts. Second, understanding and improvement of the teaching of adults is advanced through quantitative description and analysis of teaching practice within naturalistic settings.

Our approach utilizes structured observation with a process for inductively deriving the categories of teaching events which reflect the particular, naturalistic settings in which the methodology is to be used. Furthermore, because it employs computer technology with videotape synchronization, the methodology allows for the recording of multiple overlapping events in real time. Thus, the process is capable of developing profiles of teaching which are more faithful to the emerging, moment-to-moment contexts of teaching. This methodology represents not only an important process for academic researchers interested in studying the teaching of adults. It can also provide teachers with the capacity for studying and building expertise within their practices.

#### Development of the Methodology

This methodology was adapted from a process originally developed for use within K-12 contexts and modified for the study of teaching in adult education settings.

Observational categories of teaching events are inductively derived from specific situations under study. This category system is programmed into IBM-compatible hardware or any MAC 6100 or above which contains SoftWindows 3.1. Coding of teaching sessions is then conducted on the computer using videotape synchronization. The collection program allows the recording of start and stop times of multiple overlapping events in real time. This process allows for multiple passes through the data and for coding the occurrence of simultaneous events within particular contexts, such as teacher and student behaviors taking place simultaneously, or when the teacher or student is engaged in two or more overlapping behaviors. The collection program also includes a key definition procedure to allow for multiple observations, multiple alternative data collection keying procedures, and a file manager for multiple data records. The computer program also allows for several different forms of analysis, including frequency, duration, rate, and temporal percentages of each observed event, sequential analyses, graphic representations of the data analyses, and a subgrouping routine to allow separate analyses of subgroups of events within all program applications.<sup>1</sup>

Three teachers providing instruction in adult basic and secondary and education (ABE/ASE) in two different programs were used for the development of the category system. The primary source of financial support for these programs is provided by federal funds distributed through the Department of Education. All three teachers were white, middle-aged women who taught in these programs part-time. All three had more than five years of experience in ABE/ASE, although not within the particular settings observed. These teachers were selected by a state-wide panel of their peers as representing exemplary teaching practice in ABE/ASE within the State of Nebraska. The number of students in each of these three settings ranged

from 10 to 22. The student group in all three settings ranged in age from late adolescence to older, middle-aged adults but the median ages for the three groups were in the early twenties. All three groups included men and women, and represented culturally diverse backgrounds. Two of the settings represented urban populations and one represented a more rural population. The settings for these classes were a Salvation Army Center, a city library, and an elementary school.

A total of 20 hours of observations were recorded. The videotapes were then independently viewed several times by two graduate students in adult education. They were instructed to list all the different kinds of instructional events they saw occurring within the recorded sessions, such as the teacher talking directly to individual students or to groups of students, asking questions, answering student questions, or selecting curricular materials for their students. The two lists were then compared and discussions took place with the senior author regarding the meaning of the events listed. Through this process, events that were clearly redundant were eliminated and events reflecting similar occurrences were collapsed into one category. A list of 17 events were identified and the observers were then instructed to independently review segments of the recorded teaching sessions from the perspective of the tentative category system. Following these observations, the research team again met to discuss any modifications of the system that the observers felt were necessary. Finally, the modified category system was reviewed several times with one of the authors who was experienced in this methodology. This review process continued until the team felt that the category system represented both a comprehensive profile of possible teaching events within these settings, the categories were clearly specified, and the system set up in a manner to maximize reliability of observations. Two student categories were then added to the 17 teacher categories.

Five clusters representing 19 categories of teaching events were identified: (a) observation/ management, (b) instruction, (c) encouragement/reinforcement, (d) psychosocial/non-task, and (e) student responding. Behavioral definitions of each category were carefully developed. Examples of specific categories include specific observation, verbal instruction, instructional questioning or answering, positive feedback, psychosocial questioning, listening to nontask student talk, and appropriate student responding. The 17 categories<sup>2</sup> were programmed into a PC-compatible software system, developed for field systems analysis by one of the co-authors. Observer training included 15-20 hours of instruction and practice in the use of the methodology and the category system, using teaching sessions that served as a representative standard for the category system. Interobserver agreement was conducted for each observer at the conclusion of the training and at various points throughout the coding process by comparing two independent but simultaneous observations of the same teaching episode. Cohen's Kappa was used to assess the reliability of data on frequency of teaching behaviors and classroom percentage of teacher behaviors (Sharpe, Hawkins, & Ray, in press). Average coefficients for the reliability procedures were well within accepted limits for this form of methodology.

#### Application of the Methodology to Adult Education

The methodology described here can be easily applied to a wide variety of research and practice settings and contexts within adult education. The software system is relatively "user friendly" and skill in its application can be obtained with five to 10 hours of practice. To inductively derive the categories, individuals need to spend a fair amount of time immersed in the naturalistic environment, attending to both the

specifics of the setting and the context of the teaching. Combining both direct observation with videotaped observations provides a solid data base that can be used to construct the categories. Once the categories are identified and defined, programming them into the software is easily achieved. An additional 10-15 hours will be required to obtain sufficient expertise with using the computer to reliably collect data on events of interest.

As a research approach, this methodology provides complete and accurate descriptions of the practices that teachers employ when working with adults. Given these descriptions, it is possible to develop comparative profiles of beginning teachers and teachers who are recognized as more experienced and skillful. Such a comparison may help us better understand how expertise is developed within specific teaching settings, such as ABE/ASE. Profiles of similar settings, such as ABE/ASE, family literacy, and workplace education, can be conducted to help us better understand what is comparable and what is different about these particular teaching situations. It is also possible to study the effects of teaching practices on the actions and behaviors of students working in these settings, developing a better understanding of the functional relationships that might exist among teacher student interactions and content learning.

The approach to the study and improvement of teaching adults outlined here is fundamentally grounded in the notion that it is the regular instructional practices of the teacher and regular teacher-learner-setting interactions which are of the greatest impact on the learning that is experienced within adult education. To this end, the methodology is particularly suited to fostering inquiry-oriented staff development. Practitioners can work with researchers to develop a deeper understanding of the particular contexts in which they work and to use this understanding to improve their practices. For example, practitioners may be interested in using this system to obtain feedback on the percentage of instructional time they spend in certain kinds of teaching events, the ways in which they sequence behaviors, or the effects that certain teaching behaviors have on student behaviors within the learning setting.

<sup>1</sup> For more information about the technology used in this methodology, contact Professor Tom Sharpe, Department of Health and Human Performance, Rm 244MABL, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE, 68588-0229, (402) 472-3922, tsharpe@unlinfo.unl.edu.

<sup>2</sup> A description of the category system is available from the senior author upon request, Department of Vocational and Adult Education, Rm 519 NH, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE, 68588-0515, (402) 472-5924, jdirkx@unlinfo.unl.edu.

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## THE USE OF REFLECTION-IN-ACTION BY ADULT EDUCATORS: AN INQUIRY INTO SCHÖN'S EPISTEMOLOGY OF PRACTICE

Natalie M. Ferry

**Abstract:** This qualitative study documented the use of reflection-in-action by adult educators in problematic situations. The results demonstrated that novice and experienced reflecting educators use reflecting-in-action and reflecting-on-action as a means to develop expertise. The results indicated that experience alone is not the "master teacher" of the reflective process.

### Introduction

Highly successful practitioners have developed a level of expertise which is characterized by their ability to spontaneously generate solutions within problematic situations (Cervero, 1990; Schön, 1987). Experience generated within the context of action is viewed as playing a key role in the development of professional expertise by both Donald Schön's (1987) reflection-in-action model and cognitive psychology theory (Benner, 1984; Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986; Elbaz, 1981). Both theoretical frameworks focus upon the key role experience provides in the development of expertise.

A review of cognitive psychological literature reveals that experience is viewed as the mechanism that refines the novice's rule-driven performance into the highly personal, fluid, holistic practice of the expert (Chi, Glaser & Farr, 1988; Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986; Patel & Groen, 1991; Salthouse, 1991). From this perspective, experience is viewed as the "teacher" of skills and knowledge needed to become an expert.

Donald Schön (1987) also proposes that reflection-in-action evolves from experience. However, within Schön's writings a contradiction appears to exist in how the reflection-in-action process develops. Schön indicates that reflection-in-action is an innate process emulating from the competencies one already possesses while also postulating that reflection-in-action is generated and reshaped through experimentation and reflection.

This paper reviews and reports research findings of an investigation that studied these two theoretical frameworks of expertise. The research study was designed to collect descriptive documentation that could be used to clarify ambiguities of Schön's theory of the development of reflection-in-action and its role in the emergence of expertise.

### Methodology

The study's focus was to investigate the mental processes involved in problem solving. Since individuals engage problem situations from a personal conceptualization that is unobservable, qualitative interviewing was used to provide respondents with the greatest opportunity to express their understanding of their decision processes. A standardized open-ended interview protocol with think-aloud problem situations was used to collect data that revealed individual's inferences and identified salient features of a situation and strategies used (Ericsson & Simon, 1984).

During the first phase of the study, a questionnaire with a problematic situation was sent to fifty-two novice and experienced extension educators. Novice educators

with less than two year's extension experience and experienced educators with more than ten year's extension experience were purposefully selected. Using criteria based on Schön's five indicators of the reflective process, responses to the problematic situation were coded and used to sort participants into novice and experienced subgroups who were judged to be using or not using reflection-in-action. The final novice interview subgroups were composed of one reflecting and seven non-reflecting educators. The experienced subgroups were composed of five reflecting and five non-reflecting practitioners.

In phase two of the study an interview protocol was used to generate descriptions of individuals' problem-solving processes. Think-aloud interview questions were designed using real world practice situations with a deliberate insertion of problematic outcomes that could trigger reflection-in-action. The interviews were taped and transcribed to provide a verbatim record.

The data generated were inductively analyzed using Strauss and Corbin's (1990) coding process. Five primary themes emerged: definition of problematic incident, generation of solution alternatives, testing-in-action of selected solutions, reaction to incongruency, and reflection-on-action: a learning strategy. Through selective coding, the core theme, reflective decision-making vs. performance of duties, evolved as the study's central phenomenon.

## Findings

The data from this study revealed two significantly different patterns in the ways reflecting and non-reflecting educators resolved practice problems. Reflecting educators, whether novice or experienced, resolved problems by becoming personally involved in a holistic contextual exploration of the problem's definition and solution process. Reflection-on-action was the vital component of their decision-making process which provided the mechanism for learning that improved their future decision-making strategies. The novice reflecting educator demonstrated as skillful use of the reflecting-in-action and reflecting-on-action processes as did the experienced reflecting practitioners.

The non-reflecting practitioners, both novice and experienced, consistently demonstrated their strong reliance upon using the technical rational model for decision-making. These educators viewed their decision making as applying the steps of a process with limited personal involvement. By distancing themselves from the process the results were viewed simply as outcomes; outcomes to be evaluated as successful or not. The outcomes were not used as a stimulus for further problem solving or for reflecting-on the decision process. "I try not to second guess cause you just beat yourself on the head. Hindsight's twenty-twenty vision."

### Mode of Problem Identification

The mode of problem identification emerged as one of the most significant differences between the reflecting and non-reflecting groups. The novice and experienced reflecting educators spent more time in the process of contextually defining the uniqueness of the problem within a context of contributing factors. They sought to know as much as possible about the problem that clearly defined its unique parameters. The reflective practitioners further contextualized problems by framing them in terms of the people involved and the occurring interaction. The reflecting educators involved others in helping them to define the presenting problem.

In contrast the non-reflecting novice and experienced educators approached problem identification by focusing upon isolating what's wrong as quickly as possible so it could be addressed. A situation was categorized as a problem, "because it's not happening as it should," therefore, action was warranted to react. Once identified the problem was quickly put into a category so it could be defined, solutions generated and resolved. Novice non-reflecting practitioners spoke of bypassing the defining stage to moving directly into the action phase. "I don't think I take the time to stop and say okay this is the problem. I just see something that's not right and try to fix that."

### Solution Generation

The non-reflecting practitioners sought to, as quickly as possible, identify a self-perceived acceptable solution that was available within the confines of the present situation. The reflecting educators interactively generated solutions by involving others within the situation and looked beyond the parameters of the context to address the problem to meet the expressed needs of those involved.

### Testing-In-Action Of Solutions

The testing-in-action of selected solutions was evidenced in descriptions of reflecting educators as a mental rehearsal process which supported the generation of new alternatives that had not been previously identified. They described a kind of interactive experimentation in which competing solutions were tested to gain feedback which was used to adjust one's problem definition and generate new solutions. "You've got to think about all your alternatives and then you've got to think about the impact, and there's always an impact."

The non-reflective practitioners, weighed the pros and cons of alternatives, then selected the alternative that was judged "best" and enacted it. The process only involved others if they asked for advice about "what I should do" in the situation, not for the purpose of testing the appropriateness of alternatives.

### Response To Inconsistencies

Inconsistencies occurring within the problem-solving process were viewed as positive occurrences that strengthened the reflective educators' decision-making process. Incongruence triggered in them the reframing process. "Maybe that glitch is because you're working on the wrong thing so I'd go back, not just to what are my alternatives, but go back to the situation and decide if I really defined the problem right to begin with."

Non-reflecting educators portrayed an impersonal perspective of dealing with unexpected problem inconsistencies. Experienced non-reflecting educators viewed inconsistencies as inconveniences which one had to deal with by returning to their previously identified list of alternatives to select another solution. "If it's not going to be one solution I'm going to have a B and sometimes even a C, at least an A, B and a C." Novice non-reflecting practitioners reacted with an emotional response of "not knowing what to do." The distancing process fostered their conception that they had limited control over problem resolution. "I really kind of have the attitude that if things are supposed to happen they'll happen, if things aren't supposed to happen they won't and there's not a lot of need to get real upset or concerned about it."

### Reflection-On-Action

The use of reflection-on-action, a reconstructive mental review, played an integral role in the reflecting educators' decision process and provided the avenue to learn from the process. "It's almost like reliving the situation or second guessing yourself if you would have made another decision or you would have said something else or if you would have done something different, then maybe things would have been different and again it's not just the wrong decisions that I reflect." The reflective process focused on the role the individual played in the problem resolution process. The reflective educator's personal involvement provided the mechanism that supported their assessment of their assumptions and behaviors in relation to the problem's resolution.

Little or no evidence of reflection-on-action was revealed in the responses of non-reflecting practitioners. Problem resolution was viewed as "done and over" not to be "worried about." Only a major negative outcome triggered a reconsideration of the problem. The major focus of review was to resolve issues of fault, not to foster learning to strengthen one's decision-making strategies.

### **Discussion**

The contrasting nature of the study's reflecting and non-reflecting educators' problem solving supports Schön and other researchers (Cervero, 1990; Munby & Russell, 1989) who propose that practitioners who reflect-in-action use a profoundly different problem-solving process than those who are non-reflecting. The reflecting educators fluidly used Schön's reflection-in-action decision process while the non-reflecting practitioners followed a sequential, technical rational model of problem resolution. Problem solving for the non-reflective practitioners had become a job to be performed by using the steps in the problem-solving process with as little personal involvement as possible. In contrast, the reflective practitioners were so actively involved in their decision-making process that the process was viewed as an ongoing cycle, an ever expanding learning process which builds upon past experiences.

The importance of the difference in the reflecting and non-reflecting practitioners problem identification processes may be the most significant aspect in determining the effectiveness of problem outcomes. The study's findings strongly support the significant role problem definition plays in the reflecting educators' problem-solving; however, it was found to play only a perfunctory role in the non-reflecting educators' problem resolution. This is consistent with cognitive psychology research which has described experts as spending more time in the problem definition process; becoming personally involved with the problematic context; and contextualizing the problem situation far beyond its immediate parameters (Benner, 1984; Lawrence, 1988; Simon, 1973; Vost & Post, 1988).

In contrast the findings indicate that the non-reflecting practitioners are triggered into a technical rational problem-solving sequence by their approach to problem definition. Similar to the cognitive psychology literature's description of novices, the non-reflecting educators approached problem framing by quickly isolating surface symptoms to define a problem, thus creating a well-formed structure that could be treated as an instrumental problem to be solved by applying professional knowledge (Chi, Feltovich & Glaser, 1981). Both novice and experienced non-reflective educators appeared to be confined by the presenting facts of the situation and to using ritualized evidence gathering procedures. While these findings add to our understanding



of the reflection-in-action process, they point to a weakness in Schön's theory. The highly influential and distinctively different problem framing process that reflecting and non-reflecting novice and experienced educators portrayed in the study is not adequately described in Schön's writing.

The crux of Schön's model is the reflecting-in-action process in which generated and selected alternative solutions are tested-in-action. The study's results provided only weak support of Schön's hypothesis. The reflecting-in-action educators most frequently tested solutions in a mental rehearsal process. A mental rehearsal process is one in which an individual dialectically considers the relationship of one's thoughts and possible actions in a particular context (Boud, Keogh & Walker, 1985). In contrast the non-reflecting practitioners weighed the pros and cons of alternatives to identify their "best" choice. Using an instrumental problem-solving process contributes to alternatives being measured by their effectiveness in achieving a pre-established goal that has been determined outside of the context. The practitioner, not the contextual problem, determines the best "fit" to solve the problem.

Schön's writings draw a clear distinction between reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. Within his writings, limited emphasis is placed on the role reflection-on-action plays in the reflective decision makers' strategies. Supportive of cognitive research reflection-on-action played a significant role in the novice and experienced reflecting educators' decision process (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1991; Sweller, 1988). The reflecting educators spoke of the ongoing reflection process that occurs after a problem as a vital learning mechanism that had great impact on improving their future problem solving. Scardamalia and Bereiter (1991) have proposed that nonexperts fail to learn from problematic situations by not pausing to reflect-on the specifics of the problematic situation. "In general, non-experts seem inclined toward a unidirectional process of do it and be done with it" (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1991, p. 176), however, the expert pauses after solving a problem, seeking to extract generalizable knowledge from the experience.

The study found that not all experienced educators were using reflection-in-action and that a novice reflecting educator exhibited true artistry in her use of it in resolving problems. This would seem to support Schön's (1987) hypothesis that reflection-in-action evolves from "competencies we already possess" (p. 32) or is a learned process. However, why some individuals do exhibit these competencies which the reflective practitioners, novice and experienced, clearly demonstrated is not adequately addressed in Schön's theory. It appears it is not experience alone that generates the emergence of reflection-in-action. Rather, how one uses experience is the more crucial element to understanding why some individuals reflect-in-action.

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## Adult Women's Learning in Higher Education: A Critical Review of Scholarship

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### Abstract

An extensive search of major journals and data bases raises issues and concerns about the current knowledge of women's learning. Articles on adult women's learning in higher education were difficult to locate and limited in number. Scholarship often was based on questionable assumptions about women's learning. Emerging themes about women's learning need to be supported by further research.

### Introduction

Today, there are numerous claims that women's ways of learning are unique. However, no systematic consideration of what is known about women's learning exists. The primary purpose of this research is to identify, synthesize and critique literature on adult women's learning in one setting, higher education. Initially, our goal was to present findings and conclusions about distinctive attributes of adult women's learning. However, in the process of the literature search, unexpected issues arose which raise questions about the nature of current knowledge about women's learning. The purpose of this paper is a) to describe the literature review including the search process, the nature to the literature, and the topics addressed by the literature; and b) to critically consider the findings of this literature search in particular suggesting limitations of the scholarly knowledge base on women's learning.

Several decisions were important in establishing the parameters of the literature review. First, the decision to focus on women's learning in higher education was largely pragmatic. We anticipated that there might be considerable literature related to higher education since adult women comprise its most rapidly growing proportion of students. However, we also hoped that confining the search to one type of setting would make the process more manageable than a more general search of all literature on adult women's learning. Second, adult women were defined as women over the age of twenty-five, or as adult women by the publication author. We did not include literature that focused on traditional age undergraduate students in our review. Third, we defined learning as having three aspects: process (how learning occurs); product (what is the outcome?); and function (aspects which influence learning, such as gender roles or motivation) (Smith, 1982). Publications concerned with prescriptions for teaching, program descriptions, or topics otherwise not within this definition of learning were removed from the data base.

### The Search Process

Literature that dealt with adult women's learning in any higher education setting (community college, two and four year institutions and graduate schools) was

identified from the ERIC database, from journals related to higher education, and from pertinent New Directions Series (Jossey-Bass). Our search was limited to literature written within the last ten years.

In an initial search of ERIC, we combined the descriptors women, higher education, and learning, and identified 337 potential sources. However most did not address topics that fell within the parameters of our definition of learning as described above. Few were on adult women as we had defined them. The ERIC search yielded eight papers on fiche and five article references which fit our parameters.

The meager findings from the ERIC search prompted us to do a hand search of eight journals of higher education: Change, Community, Technical and Community College Journal, Initiatives, Journal of Continuing Higher Education, Journal of Extension, Journal of Higher Education, Research in Higher Education, and Community College Review. An additional journal on education more generally, Gender and Education, was also examined. We broadened the parameter of the search somewhat and selected for analysis any article that concerned adult women learners, irregardless of topic. We found twenty-eight articles through this search. However, of those, only thirteen met our definition of learning. Two of the articles found in the hand search had also been referenced in the ERIC search.

A hand search of three Jossey Bass New Directions Series: Higher Education, Teaching and Learning, and Adult and Continuing Education was also done. Five articles related to women's learning were found. In two other articles women were one of several sub groups dealt with, and the material dealt with women's learning, so these articles were added to the five in our findings.

What did we learn from the search process? First, and unexpectedly, the data base pertaining specifically to women's learning in the sources detailed was very limited. Second, descriptors such as 'women and higher education and learning' were used generically to apply to a wide range of topics, rather than specifically to women's learning. This contributes to the appearance of a more substantial literature base than actually exists. Third, due to the ill-defined nature of learning in the data base, publications on women's learning were not easily located. If we had not adopted the time consuming hand search method, we would have been seriously lacking in what we did find. Most articles identified through the hand search were not among the sources from the initial ERIC search. As we progressed we did realize that gender differences as a descriptor might have yielded relevant articles not also labelled by the descriptor women. Finally, in studies of undergraduate students, when age was not reported, it was not clear whether adult students were included among the participants.

The following areas of discussion are based on the articles identified in the ERIC search, the hand searches of journals, and the searches of New Directions Series. While this data base is not as rich as we had hoped, we feel it is useful and appropriate as a source of ideas and issues related to literature on women's learning in higher education.

## Nature of Literature

From the literature we identified, what kind of information about women's learning is available? Articles from ERIC included seven empirical studies. Three of the empirically based articles used both quantitative and qualitative methods; three were qualitative, one was quantitative. One article was a conceptual piece. Five articles were descriptive. In a number of the articles the author(s) cited some references for support. The work, Women's Ways of Knowing (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986), was the primary source cited. However, disturbingly, there were a number of occasions when authors would make unsubstantiated statements about women's learning.

Twelve of the 13 articles from the hand search of journals were empirical studies. The proportion of empirical work, in contrast to the results of the broader ERIC search, reflects the nature of the journals that were examined. Of these empirical studies, eight used quantitative methods and four used a qualitative approach.

While a detailed critique of the empirical studies in the two searches is beyond the scope of this paper, much of this research had significant limitations. Some of the research was explicated superficially leading the reader to believe that a survey or a series of qualitative interviews were some sort of afterthought to gather a little information on a particular topic. There were instances of over-generalization and other types of sexism in research design and in interpretation (Eichler, 1988).

Because the New Directions Series are to address the application of knowledge rather than to disseminate research per se, the articles were not reporting empirical research. However, almost all of the articles made some kind of reference to empirical studies.

The three sets of literature shared some issues in common. First, some of the literature specifically on adult women was based on research with school children, apparently with the assumption that women's characteristics as learners do not change from childhood to adulthood. For example, an article on Hispanic women's learning cited Ramirez as the source for a number of statements made. Ramirez' (1973) work was a study on hemisphericity in Hispanic children, not in adults. Second, results of studies on cognitive processes of college-age women have been extended to all women students. For example, an article looking at gender differences in adult student learning cited research, including that of Miller, Finley & McKinley (1990), which had been gathered from traditional undergraduate classes. The studies were then uncritically extended to adult women. Third, women's ages were frequently not mentioned at all, or not considered when findings were discussed, seemingly considering it unimportant to differentiate among women's experiences. For example, one study noted that participants were 18-65 years of age, yet did not consider whether women 65 years of age may have had very different experiences from women 25 years of age. Challenges to the appropriateness of psychometric instruments or male constructed models such as those of Piaget for studying women's learning were non-existent.

Reflecting on what kind of literature we found, what did we learn? First, there is a limited empirical body of knowledge about women's learning in these publications. Second, many authors make generalizations about women learners based on questionable evidence. Third, age has been considered unimportant or overlooked in differentiating among women. Fourth, unchanging characteristics from childhood to adulthood were assumed. Fifth, at times conclusions from studies on women sounded like general principles of adult education, raising the question of whether women do learn differently. Finally, personal knowledge, women's stories of their own learning experiences told without commentary or interpretation by the researcher were absent, raising issues about the nature of what is considered empirical evidence.

### Topics Addressed

What topics were addressed in the literature? The topics found in the three searches can be grouped under four headings: Student/advisor relationships; classroom preferences and behavior, characteristics of women's learning, and significant influences on learning.

Examples of topics in student/advisor relationships included a study of graduate women's experience of sexual harassment by faculty, and a study of sexual attraction and power in doctoral advisement relationships where the interviewees were female students. Classroom behavior and preferences included topics such as whether or not men dominate language in the classroom, classroom climate and its relationship to women's learning, women's perceptions of classroom learning experiences, and learning/classroom preferences for low income women in higher education. Characteristics of women's learning included characteristics such as field dependence/independence, self concept, fear of failure, and models of women's learning. Under the heading of characteristics of women's learning, much of the work relied on Women's Ways of Knowing (Belenky, et al., 1986). These studies included such topics as managing the tenure learning environment with constructivist or proceduralist mentors and women's distinct developmental schemas of approaching learning. Significant influences on learning included issues such as the social construction of gender as related to learning behaviors and cultural factors which influence Hispanic women's learning.

What did we learn from the topics addressed? In a positive sense, some topics suggest that a focus on women learners may draw attention to previously unexamined issues such as sexuality and student-educator relationship. However, these topics can also reflect biased assumptions about when single sex research is appropriate or necessary. Studying only women students may reinforce stereotypes, such as sexuality as a woman's issue.

The several articles on low income women in higher education raised for us an awareness of an understudied group of women whose special social, economic, educational and historical conditions interact with their learning endeavors.

Though our review was limited in scope, it suggests that there has been little attention directed to the process of learning for women. Our search revealed that while the work of Belenky et al. (1986) on women's ways of knowing is widely cited,



their particular line of research was not being extended in the sources we reviewed. We found one study (Mott, 1991) which has contributed additional understandings to the Belenky et al. work. Furthermore, aspects of women's learning which differ from the epistemological issues of knowing, and belief in sources of knowing, studied by Belenky et al. (1986) are non-existent.

Also informative is the consideration of what areas have not been addressed. Psychological lenses were the primary perspectives through which the research we found had been filtered. Neglected were studies informed by sociological lenses, thus obscuring the issues of the social construction of knowledge, learning, learning situations, and of the social determinants of gender roles and gender norms. Feminist research was absent. Thus, research failed to look at issues of sexism in the power relationships involved in learning, and omitted conducting wider social, economic, and political analyses of the constraints under which the process of learning actually takes place for women.

### **Closing Comments**

Thus far, we would conclude there is not much work on women's learning in higher education and there is an extreme need for more work. However, we are asking questions regarding our search. First, we must ask, what is learning? Are we defining learning too narrowly? Are there multiple perspectives of adult learning which can't be pinned down in the way we tried? - Or is it that there is very little study of adult learning, much less adult women's learning being done? Second, we must be prepared to ferret out the nuances of the descriptor categories. For example, we found that the descriptors women, females and gender each produce different references.

We have relied only on more publicly distributed documents for review. Yet, dissertations are an area where considerable research is done, but not necessarily published in ERIC or in other journals. We are now examining dissertations for research on women's learning.

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\* Note: References for the articles garnered as a result of these searches will be handed out at the AERC session itself.

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## Intuition in Adult Education: A Non-Intuitive View

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The purpose of this paper is to explore the concept and process of intuitive thinking in relation to rational thought processes. Through the use of a critical thinking/learning model the goal will be to understand and integrate these processes. Critical thinking (CT) has generated much interest in adult education and has shown considerable potential in guiding learning and understanding. Intuition and reason are seen here as complementary components of CT. That is, they are complementary parts of a comprehensive and coherent view of the thinking/learning process in adult education.

### Intuition Described and Discussed

The concept of intuition goes back to ancient times. Noddings and Shore (1984) have described how Plato believed that intuition was a reliable source of knowledge and Aristotle regarded it as "an infallible source of truth" (p.7). Although we no longer place the same faith in the infallibility of intuition, there is an important link between Aristotle and Modern Theorists. Aristotle placed the concept of intuition in the realm of intellectual inquiry. Aristotle pointed out that all reasoning ultimately depends upon induction or intuition if we are to avoid an endless regress of proofs. For Aristotle, experience and intuition is equated with induction; intuition is "the result of an inductive process" (Kal, 1988, p.56). There is, invariably, an intuitive leap of understanding in the inductive process since there is never a one-to-one correspondence between conceptualization and facts. According to Noddings and Shore (1984), Aristotle's notion of intuition was fundamentally an intellectual process, a form of telescoped rationality. Aristotle himself used the term "intuitive reason".

Unfortunately, since Aristotle the concept of intuition began to take on a mystical quality that has persisted to modern times. This mystical view suggests that intuition provides insight without prior knowledge, purpose, or reason. Intuition is seen as a mysterious unconscious process. The mystical view of intuition is an epiphany like experience associated with having visions and with the supernatural. The source of this mystical view seems to be the suddenness of the intuitive product and the lack of a satisfactory theory to explain its basis in experience and previous learning (Bastick, 1982). This mystical quality, however, is not the notion of intuition that will be explored here. Instead, our interest is with cognitive notions of intuition (but not excluding the affective domain) that are directed toward understanding and the construction of externally validated forms of knowledge.

It is believed that intuition may reveal the close relationship of learning and emotions - thoughts and feelings. Bastick (1982) suggests that thought elements are related by their associated feelings and "intuition is dependent on our feelings at all stages from initial perception where feeling impressions of the information are created: through the intuitive processing where feelings may change, to the final intuition which has its accompanying feeling of certainty" (pp.58-59). Thoughts have attendant feeling associations and the intuitive product may be dependent upon

feelings; that is, the product is made conscious by an awareness of feelings. Bastick (1982) believes that "Intuitive processing manipulated feelings and only involves words through their connotative and affective associations" (p.300).

Intuition is increasingly being recognized as a key element in discovery, problem solving, understanding, and knowledge generation (Entwistle & Marton, 1994; Goldberg, 1983). Often it is seen as an unexpected vague sensation or feeling while at other times there is a clear perception or solution to a problem. Invariably, however, it is preceded by a need to understand and a concomitant focus of thought, direction, and purpose. One notion of intuition used here is that it is a gaining of insight, understanding, or overall impression without the use of discrete and easily identifiable rational steps. While it is a myth that intuitive insights occur without little previous knowledge, they are very much associated with feelings and a sense of connectedness. Such myths that intuition occurs "out of the blue" without previous direction or focus of thought do little in furthering our understanding of intuition and its place in the thinking/learning process.

Another issue that needs to be explored in understanding intuition is the role of the unconscious or preconscious. Clearly there are intuitive leaps that come at unexpected moments away from attempts to consciously resolve an issue or dilemma. At the same time, we have to be careful not to attribute too extensive or lofty a role to the unconscious. First, as we have alluded to previously, intuition is invariably preceded by considerable intellectual effort and progress. Bastick (1982) suggests that obsessive and dedicated immersion in the subject over time integrates feelings and ideas into a global inclusion resulting in the intuition.

Perkins (1981) suggests that intuitive (mental) leaps are more like hops and "are less mysterious and more explainable than they are usually taken to be" (p.49). He also suggests that the unconscious supports many mundane activities and is "where the action is". This is not to say that we can explain covert processes or that intuition is simply rapid logical thought processes. The intuitive process is still relatively unreachable and open to speculation.

From an educational and learning perspective, the notion of intuition relevant here is cognitively oriented. That is, intuition is a process directed toward understanding and knowledge development. It is predicated upon an individual who has taken responsibility for his/her own learning and has been challenged to actively search for and construct meaning (Garrison, 1995). Intuition results from a deep understanding of a subject area or problem situation. From such an understanding abstract patterns become apparent and the individual is able to process larger "chunks" of information and bypass analytical steps. The ability to perceive large meaningful patterns goes to the heart of intuition (Benderly, 1989). This is supported by Entwistle and Marton (1994) in their analysis of how students and scientists intuit or construct "knowledge objects". Intuition appears to be involved in conceiving "integrated whole" (i.e., schema) which provide understanding.

The intuitive process is different from conscious reasoning. It appears to work with complex and poorly structured problem situation. Intuition can "make unusual connections, imaginative associations that are not obvious and would not show up in a logical sequence. It is intuition that leaps across chasms of missing information, making sideways detours, and brings together unusual, even illogical combinations" (Goldberg, 1983, p.36). Intuition is a nonrational or unconscious form of induction in that it suggests general propositions or constructs from divergent facts and information. However, it is important to recognize the complementary nature of

intuition and reasoning and how they work together in a holistic view of thinking and learning.

### Intuition and Critical Thinking

Critical thinking has been intimately associated with adult education. A comprehensive model of critical thinking and learning proposed by Garrison (1991, 1995) is used as the framework for the subsequent discussion of intuition and reason. The model attempted to redress the fragmentation of how we conceptualize the thinking/learning process in an educational context. The critical thinking model used here is a cyclical iterative process that can apply to a social or scientific setting. The phases are problem identification, problem definition, exploration, applicability and integration. In particular, it identifies and connects the private and shared worlds of the learner. It also incorporates processes of creative thinking as well as logical reasoning.

It was suggested previously that intuition may consist of either a vague sensation or clear perception. These two forms of intuition are distinguished in terms of intuition and insight respectively. Distinguishing between intuition and insight recognizes intuitive hunches that are ill-formed and insights that are coherent conceptualizations. The essential difference is that intuition is more closely associated with action while insight is more associated with thought. As a result, conscious reasoning follows intuition while conscious reasoning precedes insight.

In terms of the critical thinking/learning model, insight occurs during the exploration phase (see Figure 1). At this point, the person likely has an explicit understanding of the situation or problem and the relevant knowledge base. The insight is a clear perception of a solution or hypothesis without reliance on conscious reasoning. Insight is seen to follow the generation of "preinventive structures" or tentative conceptual representations. Insight is characterized by the individual being immersed in a well defined problem.

On the other hand, intuition is accompanied by a feeling, hunch or fuzzy vision that necessitates a move to more formal reasoning to better understand the issue. Intuition usually follows immediate experience and occurs at the problem recognition phase. Expert knowledge does not appear to explicitly play an important role. It has been suggested that intuition is more of a clever guess or hunch. Although some understanding of the problem or dilemma must have preceded the intuition, it occurs to a lesser degree without previous conscious exploration. That is, without a conscious and formal questioning of assumptions and initial search for conceptual representations or alternative paradigms.

It is argued here that intuition plays a major role in what Schon (1983, 1987) refers to as reflection-in-action. Reflection-in-action occurs when in the midst of an activity there is a surprise and the usual patterns of knowing-in-action (i.e. habitual responses) fail us. In this situation we may immediately rethink our knowing-in-action by focusing "interactively on the outcomes of action, the action itself, and the intuitive knowing implicit in the action" (Schon, 1983, p.56). There is an immediate conceptualization of the problem situation and confirming it through imaginative or real action. Schon (1987) suggests that inappropriate assumptions may be intuitively discarded and compressed with restructuring (i.e., re-conceptualizing). Parenthetically, reflection-on-action would be considered to represent the complete critical thinking model. Knowing-in-action is when formal structures and logical connections (i.e., schemata) are made explicit.



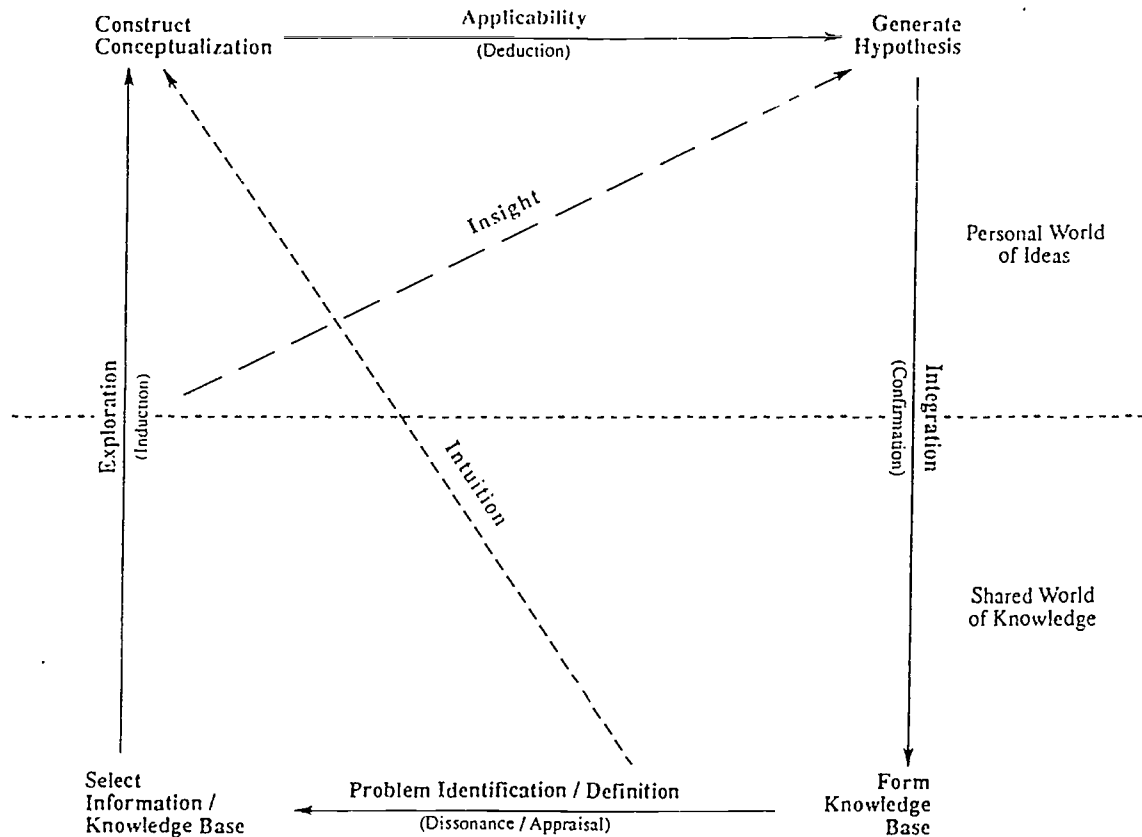


Figure 1: Intuition and critical thinking

### Intuition and Reason

If we are to understand the intuitive process that is both real and mysterious, then we will have to address the relationship of intuition and reason. It is assumed here that the intuitive mode of perceiving is not a distinct alternative method of understanding complex problems or situations. Moreover, it is assumed that intuitive or analytic approaches alone are insufficient for an understanding of thinking and learning. Salk (1983) states that "Intuition and reason play a powerful role in our lives and it is necessary, therefore, to understand each separately and together" (p.79). Perkins (1981) believes that "reasoning is an important means to insight" (p.71).

The comprehensiveness of the critical thinking model used here has the advantage of providing the framework in which to discuss and explain the complementary nature of intuition and reason. Intuition and reason can be understood both separately and together as part of a holistic thinking/learning process. According to Goldberg (1983), rationality and intuition are symbiotic in nature in that when "we are thinking through a decision or problem, we tend to hop

back and forth between conscientiously applied analysis and intuition" (p.33). He suggests that at times rationality precedes intuition, while sometimes "intuition feeds and stimulates rational thought and evaluates its products" (Goldberg, 1983, p.33). (Please note that we have called the former insight.) Similarly, Noddings and Shore (1984) recognize the complementary nature of intuition and reason when they state "we do not deny the importance and feasibility of verifying intuitions through reason or experience" (p.26). These views are consistent with the two forms of intuition described here and the model that integrates intuition and reason.

### Conclusion

Intuition has been generally described as a understanding or awareness without the sudden use of discrete rational steps and is very much associated with feelings. It comes to the fore when there is considerable uncertainty and complexity due to a novel or surprising situation. While intuition occurs spontaneously and it is not immediately apparent how it was arrived at, most often it is based upon a profound concern or knowledge of the issue or problem. To nurture intuition is not to be less rational - just the opposite. Intuition is fertilized by rational and critical analysis or it is confirmed by rational analysis. Solutions to complex problems cannot be forced. The intuitive mind must be allowed to make connections and reveal insights, often in moments of distraction or quiet reflection. Intuition without reason is an illusion of truth and leaves us mired in mysticism. Rational or logical thought without intuition is empty of inspiration. It can be likened to taking a trip back and forth on the same road; while it is very predictable we never get to discover new roads and vistas.

If the business of adult education is thinking and learning, then we must find models that help us understand intuition and its role in discovering and constructing meaning. The approach taken here was to reduce the mystery of intuition and accept its reality in thinking/learning by describing it within the context of a model of critical thinking. It is believed that separating intuitive and rational thought reduces our understanding of the learning process and consequently we are likely to devise unnatural and contrived educational situations which bear little resemblance to how people construct meaning and solve real problems. Stewart (1988) states that "intuitive thinking enables students to better comprehend complex relationships, to put things into better perspective, to generate new ideas, to perceive more ways to integrate facts, concepts and generalizations" (p.176). When adult educators recognize the symbiotic and iterative relationship between intuition and reason, then students will be able to assume increased responsibility for learning and gain greater control of the educational transaction.

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## **Pictures, Perspectives, Profiles: Reflections on Interviews with Critical Adult Educators**

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**Abstract:** This paper reports on interviews we conducted with twenty critical adult educators from Europe and North America. While they express divergent opinions on a range of topics, these critical adult educators largely agree on several core themes in adult education.

Since the early 1980s, a vocal contingent of critical adult educators have been engaged in an intriguing debate about the role and function of contemporary adult education. From a perspective informed by theoretical developments including critical theory, feminism, cultural studies, and postmodernism, they offer important critiques of increasingly technicized and professionalized forms of adult education. They counterbalance their critiques with insights into ways social and cultural forms of adult education, which recognize the place and value of instrumental considerations, can address learning challenges in today's society. The voices of these critical thinkers have been attended to by an expanding circle of keen listeners interested in forms of adult education capable of addressing a full range of technical, ethical and aesthetic issues.

Over the past 6 months, we have conducted interviews with twenty of these critical adult educators in North America and Europe. These interviews form the basis of a book in progress which offers students (undergraduate and graduate), academic theorists, and practitioners of adult education valuable practical and theoretical insights into the fate of adult education in postmodern times. In the following paper, we argue that critical adult educators largely agree on the core themes in adult education, even while they express divergent opinions about these themes. We contend that, now more than ever, adult education requires the diverse theoretical discourses and practical actions of critical adult educators if it is to meet the urgent challenges of postmodern times.

### **The Interviews: Sharing Critical Perspectives, Piecing the Picture Together**

Our intent in conducting our interviews was to offer an accessible and reflexive forum where commentators could highlight their current thoughts about adult education. Critical adult educators offer important theoretical and practical insights into the role and purpose of adult education in contemporary society. However, the complexity and novelty of their arguments and the technical nature of their language limits accessibility for many students, theorists and practitioners. People who would otherwise benefit from the knowledge and insights expressed in critical writings cannot relate to the difficult language and the unfamiliar concepts which typically characterize these works. We hoped to open the door to critical adult education for an expanded readership. Interviews provide an accessible vehicle to explore ideas, investigate issues and recount formative experiences.

In our initial discussions about what we wanted our interviews to accomplish, we decided that each interview would explore the principle influences shaping the commentator's involvement in adult education. We would ask each contributor to recollect key points in his or her personal biography -- the values, the events and trends, the mentors, the concerns and challenges, the viewpoints -- that shaped him or her as an adult educator. Second, we wished to have each commentator assess the current status of adult education as a field of theory and practice. We sought to investigate the role of social and cultural forms of adult education, examine the function of the university in contemporary adult education, and query the shifting boundaries of the field. Third, we hoped to highlight the central themes and issues emerging from each commentator's own writings and practices. Cognizant of the changing nature of the field, we wanted each commentator to discuss contentious issues, clarify salient points, and pursue the implications of his or her perspective for our emerging field.

**Selecting Contributors:** We have chosen our contributors from North America and Europe to reflect a broad spectrum of critical perspectives in the field of adult education. Our choices emerge from our interest in how adult educators living and working in the West are having their thoughts and ideas challenged by contemporary society in transformation. While we have endeavored to ensure that the interviews represent a multi-vocality within the field of adult education, we have not included the many significant critical adult educators working in developing nations. We are very aware of the important contribution these critical adult educators from around the world are making to the theory and practice of our field. We consider our interviews, to date, as one part of a larger interview project which investigates the nature of adult education in a changing global context.

**Developing Interview Questions:** From the outset we realized that the dynamic nature of the interview process would undoubtedly impact our understanding of our project. Quite rightly, we anticipated that with each passing interview additional, perhaps significant, themes would crystallize that would impact the nature of subsequent interviews. Our growing understanding of the role and purpose of adult education in postmodern times achieved during our early interviews would allow us to pursue previously unmarked discursive trails in later interviews.

To develop questions for each contributor, we reviewed their writings and then identified prevalent themes and ideas guiding their theory and practice. With this understanding, we generated interview questions that, on one level, were tailored to the specific writings, interests and orientation of each commentator, and, on another level, were aimed towards a synthesis based on emerging themes.

**Conducting Interviews:** Many decisions we have made in this project were affected by limited funding. While we would have preferred to conduct all interviews face-to-face, we have had to carry out many interviews using tele-conference. We had some initial reservations about this mode of data-gathering; however, we have found that the telephone has been a very adequate means for conducting exciting and productive interviews. Face-to-face interviews offer the obvious benefits of direct interpersonal contact (body-language, expression and context). Yet, telephone interviews provide more subtle but important benefits which come from an increased focus on voice, intonation, and language. All interviews were approximately two hours long, guided by



a preliminary set of questions. Some of the interviews followed the guide more closely than others. In most cases, the interviews evolved with supplementary questions inspired by the flow of the conversation.

### **Divergent Travelers -- Convergent Themes: Journeys Through the Adult Education Landscape**

Although the contributors to our book form a heterogeneous group, with different interests, backgrounds and theoretical orientations, the themes that concern them most are surprisingly homogeneous. This does not mean, of course, that our contributors hold the same views on core themes in contemporary adult education. What it does mean is that critical adult educators **largely agree on what the core themes are**, even as they express divergent opinions about these themes. We view this to be a considerable finding. It suggests that a basis exists for building a strong community among critical adult educators united in their understanding of adult education's most pressing challenges. It also suggests that successful engagement with these challenges requires critical adult educators who are radically open to others who hold alternative perspectives. The expanding discursive formation of critical adult education promises to grow in liveliness as different voices insist on being heard.

The following recounts six major themes which prevailed in our interviews. These themes gradually evolved over the course of our research. They are our effort to broadly summarize and represent pieces of conversation, trajectories of thought and vistas of sentiment captured in our interviews.

***The Discursive Re-formation of Adult Education:*** All of our contributors worried about the fate of adult education. Reflecting on prevailing notions about its role and function, they doubted the capacity of these ideas to guide adult education through contemporary social and cultural upheavals. Many insisted that adult education's future hinges on the capacity of its members to articulate a field of theory and practice capable of meeting the challenges of postmodern times. The discursive formation of adult education requires re-formation: its boundaries must be recharted, its aspirations must be reimagined, its practices must be revised, its members must be revitalized. This re-formation demands that theoretical discourses be valued and remain connected to the practical realities of everyday life; that the boundaries of adult education be permeable to multiple voices and clearly grasped as a consequence of relations of power; that social theory be drawn upon to understand adult education as a cultural practice situated in a dynamic and changing world; that the history of adult education be reinvestigated to discover its excluded heritages and to reveal the power relations which hardened its current boundaries; and that adult education be reinforced as an inclusive community capable of dealing with the contradictions of globalization and fragmentation.

***Theory and Worldliness:*** All of our contributors insisted on the importance of theory in clarifying the role and function of adult education. They lamented the weakness of theorizing in the field, pointing to the failure of adult educators to incorporate interdisciplinary perspectives. Some criticized the incestuous nature of adult education theorizing, observing how adult educators all too often reference one another without delving into original theoretical literature from other fields. The insulation of adult education from the discourses of other disciplines, its failure, even,

to remain attuned to the theoretical developments in school-based education, limits its capacity to grow and develop as a field in tune with the rapid pace of change in the information society.

Despite their exhortation about the place and value of theory, almost all of the contributors to our book also asserted that adult education retain, to use Edward Said's term, its "worldliness" (Hall, 1992, p. 278). This means that, at the same time as adult educators engage in theoretical discourse, they must remember that adult education is political. In the end, adult educators must return "theory to the something nasty down below," to the thickness and discontinuity of everyday life (p. 278). All of our contributors insisted that adult education's theoretical adventures must never be detached from the practical exigencies of real people in real contexts.

**Dialogical Action:** Many of our contributors contended that, as a cultural politics, adult education must engage the complexities of dialogical action. Several observed that the source of these complexities is an inherent tension between open dialogue and effective action. On the one hand, some contended that the continued development of adult education as a critical cultural politics is contingent on its capacity to ensure that its discursive boundaries remain radically open to the multivocality of the many individuals and groups interested in participating in the field. Adult education must refuse to present itself as an immutable grand narrative. Its discursive boundaries must be shaped by unhindered communication in which no perspectives are excluded and no voices are left unheard. Despite the conflict and confusion in unsettled borderlands, this group of contributors claimed that an increased openness to alternative perspectives will develop adult education as an enriched, multidimensional terrain.

On the other hand, other commentators argued that, because of adult education's political aspirations -- its determination to take a stand and to fight for specific positions -- its discursive boundaries cannot remain completely amorphous. This group contended that, while openness to alternative perspectives is crucial, at some point, for the sake of effective action, a temporary closure of discourse is required.

While contributors varied in their assessments of how open or closed the boundaries of adult education should be under current conditions, virtually all agreed that neither absolute openness nor resolute closure is, in the end, sufficient for dialogical action. Adult educators must engage the daunting task of somehow pulling together these polar forces into a dynamic and synergistic dyad. In determining the boundaries of their field, they must be simultaneously open to the other and determined to act.

**Reclaiming the Social Perspective:** A central concern of many of our contributors was the lack of sophisticated social analyses in adult education. Since the 1960s, adult education has drawn its theoretical sustenance from the pervasive literature of behavioral psychology. This, some of our commentators observed, has left adult education with an individualized conception of the human being, an instrumental notion of reason, an obsession with technique and a preoccupation with efficiency and control. The psychologism of adult education has precluded the development of the field's capacity to understand the complex social contexts which frame human interaction. Consequently, adult education blows easily in the wind of contemporary

social trends and developments. As several of our commentators relate, adult education seems to serve everyone else's agendas without having one of its own.

Given the vast transformations of postmodernity, adult education can no longer afford to shun a more sophisticated social perspective. All of our commentators agreed that adult education must draw on a variety of social theoretical insights to understand the place and role of adult education in contemporary society. Considerable differences existed among our contributors concerning what forms of social theory would best guide the development of the field. All agreed, however, that adult education must seek to augment its current psychologicistic outlook with social theoretical perspectives. They contended that, only with this broadened perspective, can adult education appreciate and resist its complicity with dominant social and cultural forces.

***Retrieving the Historical Perspective:*** Several of our commentators insisted that the history of adult education needs to be revisited to recover forgotten initiatives in adult education and suppressed instances of social learning. They contend that it is essential to understand the lapses in our collective memory as an effect of the historical dynamics of social power. It is essential to untangle how forces of domination hardened the boundaries of adult education and hid important historical adult education ventures from our view. It is important to acknowledge ostracized forms of adult education, not so we can claim them as part of our own heritage, because they are not, but so that we can understand the variety and multiplicity of perspectives that can shape adult education. A critical historical perspective helps us analyze the specific configuration of forces shaping our current theories and practices.

***Building a Community of Critical Adult Educators:*** Many of our commentators who identify themselves as critical adult educators lamented the lack of connection they have with others concerned with the social and cultural dimensions of adult education. Critical adult educators find themselves isolated from one another and excluded from a field increasingly obsessed with commodified forms of adult education. Many commentators raised concerns about the adequacy of means for interacting, dialoging and sharing with other critical adult educators. Existing venues for dialogical action like conferences and journals, while sufficient for maintaining friendly and supportive relationships, do not provide sufficient opportunity for the type of sustained and intensive encounters many contributors feel they now need. Several thought that critical adult educators need to make special efforts to foster the development of their unique and important community. They suggested that concrete ventures like thematized critical educational institutes, list-servers, mini-conferences, and academic exchanges would enhance the development of the community.

### **The Vitality of Critical Adult Education**

The most exciting aspect of our interviews was our discovery that, at the same time as critical adult educators hold different beliefs about the role and purpose of adult education, they share similar perspectives on the themes and issues crucial to our field. Despite their isolation, they constitute an integral community with vast potential to impact the development of the field. Their theoretical sophistication coupled with their practical orientation places them in a unique position to revitalize a

field collapsing under the weight of commodification and instrumentalization. The determination of these contributors to solidify their relationships, to dialogue with one another, to struggle through conflicts, to open themselves to alternative perspectives and to foster their community leads us to believe that this group of commentators is capable of generating the diverse theoretical discourses and practical actions required to meet the urgent challenges of postmodern times.

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## TOWARD A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD: THE ROLES OF MENTORS AND CRITICAL FRIENDSHIPS IN THE LIVES OF WOMEN DOCTORAL STUDENTS

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**Abstract:** This study examines mentoring relationships and supportive friendships formed by women doctoral students in an adult education program and examines how these affinities affected the women students' persistence in pursuing their doctoral degrees.

### Introduction: A Male Model of Mentoring

The concept of mentoring comes from Homer's *Odyssey*; the goddess of wisdom, Athene, took on the image of Mentor, a true friend of Odysseus, and while Odysseus was off fighting the Trojan War, served as a model, counselor and teacher to Telemachus, Odysseus' son (Stalker, 1994). Mentor nurtured and guided Telemachus, who became his apprentice, disciple and student (Carden, 1990). Thus notions of male-mentor male-mentee relationships began.

Contemporary definitions of mentoring vary, however most capture some of the characteristics Homer described. Daloz (1986) asserts that mentors are essentially guides, stating further that "they lead us along the journey of our lives. They embody our hopes, cast light on the way ahead, interpret arcane signs, warn us of lurking dangers, and point out unexpected delights along the way" (pg. 17). Caffarella expands this notion further by saying mentoring involves "an intense caring relationship in which persons with more experience work with less experienced persons to promote both professional and personal development" (1992, p. 38). In academic settings, "less experienced" students may seek out faculty members to guide them in both their academic career and, once they graduate, as they strive to achieve career goals. In *Women's Ways of Knowing*, Belenky, Clincher, Goldberger & Tarule point out that it is teachers who should "assist students in giving birth to their own ideas, in making their own tacit knowledge explicit and elaborating on it" (1986, p. 217).

Faculty mentors of either gender can play an important role in the lives and future careers of doctoral students; however, our own experiences as women doctoral students and the experiences of other women students inform us that initiating mentoring relationships with faculty members can be problematic and complex, particularly when all available faculty mentors are male. If women perceive that faculty mentors are unavailable to them, they may form other types of supportive relationships; these relationships, while not fitting androcentric notions of mentoring, may provide women with the support they require to persist and succeed in academe. The purpose of our inquiry was to examine mentoring relationships and supportive friendships formed by women in an adult education doctoral program and explore how the lack of women faculty members affected women students' persistence in their doctoral program. Our research is based upon the feminist perspective (Belenky et al, 1986) that women have a different "way of knowing" as learners and therefore, as mentees in mentoring relationships. In order to explore this issue, we focused on three research questions: 1) In graduate adult education programs, how do women who aspire to become leaders in adult education identify mentors and support



systems within the educational framework? 2) What roles do critical friendships with other doctoral students play in the lives of female doctoral students? 3) What impact does the gender of faculty members have on women students as they seek mentoring relationships?

To answer these questions, we will first briefly discuss critiques and research of mentoring which characterize problems women may encounter as they seek to form and sustain mentoring relationships. We will then describe our study of women doctoral students in adult education, present our findings and discuss their implications.

### **The Framework of Mentoring**

In Homer's *Odyssey*, Athene became a man in order to mentor Telemachus, thus giving rise to the largely androcentric view of mentoring that prevails in the literature and in the real life of the university. Carden (1990) questions contemporary notions of mentoring, asking whether mentoring "sanctions an elitist patron system that excludes the socially different...and maintains a status quo based on accumulation of advantage and replication of exploitative hierarchical systems" (p.276). Stalker (1994) critiques mentoring from a feminist viewpoint, stating that traditional research and models of mentoring are androcentric; furthermore, problems that may be inherent in men mentoring women are not discussed in the literature of adult education and assumptions are made that women mentors will reproduce the "patriarchal academe" (p. 365) that is dominant in universities. However mentoring is defined, most previous research on mentoring assumes that the gender of either the mentor or mentee does not impact how the relationships are formed or the quality of the interactions between mentor-mentee (Stalker, 1994; Carden, 1990; Merriam, 1983). Most research on mentoring to date is based on male-male relationships, the gender of both the mentor and mentee has not been an important factor in any of the studies (Stalker, 1994), and when women are included in these studies, they are shown to be deficit in the "correct ways of knowing" mentoring.

Research on mentoring in the business environment has shown that mentoring relationships are frequently not as available to women as they are to men (Cook, 1979; Hill et al., 1989; Noe, 1988). Some of the problems are lack of women mentors (Hunt & Michael 1983; Collard & Stalker, 1991), problems with men mentoring women (Halcomb, 1980; Stalker, 1993), and conflicts between work and family responsibilities (Blunt & Lee, 1994). Another problem women doctoral students may encounter in academe is that they often are unfamiliar with the academic environment (Prince, 1991). Collard and Stalker (1991) assert that academe provides a chilly environment for women. Prince's (1991) study of doctoral students concluded with the suggestion that faculty support is essential in order for students to be successful in doctoral programs.

How often women are able to find this faculty support is an important question that has not been answered by previous studies. Our objective in this study was to listen to the voices of women doctoral students as they described the problems they encountered finding mentors and role models in academe. We sought to understand the nature of male-faculty-female-student mentoring relationships and examine how other supportive or critical alliances affected women's persistence in the doctoral program and enhanced their development as future leaders in adult education.

### **Finding the Answers**

This study was comprised of two parts: a questionnaire mailed to 56 female doctoral students in adult education in a medium sized midwestern university and follow-up interviews with ten students. Participants were in various stages of completion of the doctoral program. The limitations of our study were that we only surveyed female doctoral students, we limited our study to one adult education doctoral program, and we did not include faculty members or male doctoral students.

### **Survey Responses**

Seventy percent of women who were sent our survey responded, indicating a high degree of interest in the subject of mentoring. One hundred percent of the respondents reported that the willingness of faculty members to spend time with them and serve as a sounding board for their ideas and projects were essential or important elements to developing and maintaining supportive mentoring relationships. Ninety-seven percent of the respondents indicated that encouragement from faculty members was essential or important to developing mentoring relationships. Eighty-six percent indicated that having time to build relationship(s) with faculty members was also essential to establishing a mentoring relationship.

We also asked students to identify important elements in their supportive relationships with other doctoral students. Ninety-five percent of the respondents reported that encouragement from other students, students' willingness to spend time building relationships, and "time" once again were essential or important to developing and maintaining supportive mentoring relationships with other doctoral students.

From the responses to our survey, we learned that "time" and "encouragement" were important elements to building and maintaining mentoring relationships, not only with faculty but with others. In open-ended questions which asked students to describe mentoring relationships with both faculty and other students, women students reported that communication, trust and caring, encouragement to both complete the degree and to present and publish research, and time to build mutual interests were important elements for building mentoring and supportive relationships with both faculty members and others.

### **Interview Responses**

In order to better understand and validate the themes that emerged from our survey, the second phase of our research consisted of one hour personal interviews with ten respondents of the survey who indicated their willingness to participate. All ten interview informants were European descended Americans between the ages of 37 to 55; two were in the beginning stages of the program, six had finished coursework and were writing dissertations, and two were graduates of the program working in academe as faculty members. Even though most women reported developing supportive relationships with either faculty or other doctoral students, women seemed to experience mentoring with faculty members and critical friendships differently from each other depending on their willingness to initiate and/or sustain those relationships. Their stage of completion in the doctoral program, and how they defined their needs for mentors and critical friendships also affected how they perceived mentoring. The following issues emerged from the interviews:

**Gender: "The Invisible Woman."** Although some women did not express concerns about the gender of faculty members in choosing a mentor, saying that their mentor "doesn't need to be female in order to feel supported, a sense of common purpose," gender and the lack of women faculty members seemed to be an underlying issue for women when they chose a mentor. The word "invisible" emerged during interviews as women struggled to describe their experiences as women students trying to establish mentoring relationships: "Few professor encourage us to present or write, let alone recognize gender as an issue...this is an enormous barrier because it is so invisible." Another women reported that faculty members may make "suggestions that I publish, but then do not invite me to come and sit down with them so we could talk about it - it's up to me to go all the way." One women described the "invisible" difference in treatment, saying: "Although men may not see that they are treating women differently, women can see and feel it."

Women perceived that what they bring to the "playing field" of adult education may not be valued as much as what male doctoral students bring: "For some reason, people admired in class and those whose opinions were sought are VP's and managers, not nurses or teachers". One women interpreted this as being a reflection of society: "Even in class, you know who are admired - men in high roles in industry. It is a reflection of our society."

While none of the women interviewed identified the academic environment as specifically unfriendly to women, the "invisible" differences in treatment came through in their remarks. Some women reported that males seemed to develop "different" mentoring relationships with faculty members than those experienced by women. Male doctoral students with faculty mentors were given "more opportunities for professional growth, presented more often with faculty members, and given more acknowledgment for their accomplishments as doctoral students."

**Role Model: "I wanted a female role model."** Women also expressed concern about the lack of female role models in academe. "If you continually see men in those roles, it is hard to see yourself in those roles" is a poignant statement from one women which shows the effects of not having female faculty available to mentor women students. Other reflections by women showed that they clearly missed having women faculty members available as mentors. One women said she "missed a feminine perspective on my career" that she could not get from a male faculty member, saying "you connect better with someone who has had the same types of experiences you have had, such as mothering and running a family." Only three women reported actually developing what they considered a career sustaining mentoring relationship with male faculty members; other women reported developing a mentoring relationship with women outside of the adult education faculty.

**Supportive Friendships: "Provided the comfort, caring, affirmation and resilience to persist."** All the women interviewed reported that these supportive friendships were essential to helping them persist in their doctoral studies even if they had developed faculty mentoring relationships. Women viewed themselves as either mentor, providing guidance to other doctoral students, or mentee, a recipient of shared resources, affirmation, and understanding, in these supportive friendships. In forming supportive friendships, women seemed to form relationships with other women (doctoral students, mentors outside of academe, family, friends) more often than with male students. Women reported that it was "more difficult to establish and maintain

the same kind of connection with male peers." "Shared values, interests, and mutual respect...similar circumstances to share concerns" were important criteria to these women as they sought to form these relationships. The importance of these friendships to women's persistence as doctoral students was acknowledged consistently throughout the interviews: "I would not have persisted had it not been for friends...supportive friendships gave me the support I needed to continue."

**Affirmation: "Needing to know we are valued."** When women discussed what criteria they used as they sought both mentoring relationships and critical friendships, support and affirmation emerged. As women sought faculty mentors, they looked for both male and female faculty who would "value student input and take time to nurture relationships." One woman described her mentor as "someone who respected me, someone who would not be overly critical of my ideas." Women spoke of finding someone who "believed in them and made the journey less traumatic and more manageable." Women characterized their mentors as "receptive to answering questions and to providing guidance. Women reported that a "non-threatening environment" in which "ideas were valued, critiqued and challenged in and unthreatening way" helped them acclimate to the academic environment and find mentors.

### **Toward a Level Playing Field**

Our original research questions asked how women chose mentors, the impact of mentoring and critical/supportive friendships on the persistence of women doctoral students in adult education doctoral programs, and how gender of faculty members may influence women doctoral students' decisions to initiate and form mentoring relationships. Our findings showed that women sought mentors who would value them as members of the academic community, offering them support to pursue an academic career which might include presentations and publishing. Women doctoral students in our study clearly felt the absence of female role models in adult education. They perceived that gender, although not precluding them from participating in cross-gender mentoring relationships, created "invisible" barriers to their development of career sustaining mentoring relationships with male faculty members. Women made meaning of experiences where they encountered these "invisible" barriers in different ways; some persisted and established mentoring relationships with male faculty members. In addition to mentoring relationships, women students also formed supportive relationships with others which provided encouragement and affirmation for them to persist and develop professionally in their doctoral program. Women students also felt their contributions to the field of adult education were sometimes not as valued as contributions by males.

Although this study only examined one campus and one group of women doctoral students, the issues of gender, role models, supportive friendships and affirmation that emerged from both the survey and interviews of women doctoral students clearly indicated that women perceived that the "playing field" in adult education doctoral programs is not level. While women students reported that many times male faculty mentors provided affirmation and support for women students, women missed having female faculty member role models. As women students attempted to form career sustaining mentoring relationships with faculty members, women perceived that the rules were different for women and in many cases unwritten; in order to discover the rules, women had to know which questions to ask.



"Invisible" barriers and the lack of women faculty members may keep women from asking.

The women in our study clearly knew that mentoring relationships could enhance their experiences, both in the doctoral program and later in their careers. One woman expressed this need eloquently: "We all need mentors. We need different mentors at different times for different purposes." Women doctoral students who wish to develop an academic career in adult education have just as great a need for faculty mentors as male doctoral students. In order to level the playing field of adult education doctoral studies for women and expand the contributions women can make to the field, perceived "invisible" barriers which hinder women from developing career sustaining mentoring relationships need to be recognized and addressed. The "invisible" woman needs to be seen and heard in adult education.

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**RECENT STRATEGIC PLANNING DECISIONS  
BY THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA  
AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR ITS FACULTY OF EXTENSION**

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## PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to examine the implications of recent strategic planning decisions by the central administration of the University for the vitality of its Faculty of Extension and the institution's extension function in general.

## CONTEXT

The University of Alberta is the largest of four publicly-funded universities in the province of Alberta, and the second largest university in Canada. Current enrolment is approximately 30,000 full and part-time degree students. The annual operating budget in 1993-94 was almost \$330 million. This operating budget comes mainly in the form of a grant from the provincial government and in 1993-94 amounted to \$260.8 million.

The political party in power in Alberta at the moment is engaged in a determined campaign to eliminate the province's annual operating deficit and overall accumulated debt. As a result the university's budget has been steadily reduced in the past few years; in 1994-95, for example, it fell by 11%. The result, combined with the effects of vastly reduced public sector spending in other spheres, is an atmosphere of apprehension and uncertainty on and off campus.

The present Faculty of Extension was first established in 1912 as the Department of Extension and has a distinguished record of service to the province. It provides certificate, diploma, and non-degree courses in a wide variety of disciplines, primarily to adult, part-time learners. Approximately 40,000 students per annum are involved in the Faculty's courses and programs. Its official university mandate, the direct provision of non-credit (non-degree) programs and courses to the Alberta community, has been interpreted in the Faculty's mission statement as providing Albertans with opportunities to engage in lifelong learning, based on the needs of individuals and society and the resources of the university.

While one of eighteen Faculties and major program areas on campus, the Faculty is also one of the smallest in terms of academic staff and budget. There are presently 13.5 academic faculty and approximately 85 other non-academic staff in the Faculty. It has traditionally received an operating grant from the university, mainly to support academic salaries, besides generating substantial operating revenues from fees. However, in recent years the University's base budget support has been steadily and deliberately reduced. In 1990-91 it was \$2.6 million; in 1995-96 it will have fallen to \$980,000 and the possibility of total grant elimination has been raised by the university's administration.

An April, 1994 university report on the overall extension function of the University of Alberta, entitled Broader Horizons, identified other extension function providers ranging from the Faculties of Business, Engineering, Dentistry, and Medicine -- the latter two mainly providing in-service professional development -- and

with a variety of funding arrangements. It is clear, however, that the Faculty of Extension's centralized provision of extension services, together with its role as a locus of research into those facets of adult education pertaining to continuing education and lifelong learning, is virtually unique on campus.

#### RECENT UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLANNING DECISIONS AFFECTING THE UNIVERSITY AND ITS FACULTY OF EXTENSION

In 1989 the University appointed a new president. In his installation address he foreshadowed the employment of selectivity in budgeting as a response to perceived fiscal difficulties on campus. This involved the targeting of specific services and programs of the university for budget reduction or structural alteration as opposed to across the board reductions to all. Subsequent communications from the president and the university's administration reinforced their call for a strategic plan to guide the university for the next decade.

In 1991 the first real effects of this new thinking affected the campus and the Faculty of Extension in particular when a report, Maintaining Excellence and Accessibility in an Environment of Budgetary Restraint, emanated from the office of the vice-president, academic. The Faculty's budget, already less than 1% of the university's operating budget, was cut by 60% over five years and three of its vacant academic positions (\$150,000) were transferred to other faculties.

While the Faculty's administration was given an opportunity to discuss the "proposals" with the vice-president academic prior to their ratification, the clear impression left with them was that the normal academic decision making process would probably not oppose these cuts. In fact the proposals were subsequently endorsed by the institution.

The same report broke new ground at this university by proposing various Faculty mergers and re-structuring options in response to alleged fiscal crisis and program duplication and redundancy. It also set in place a committee to examine overall campus re-structuring options and led in 1992 to a two-year enquiry into the university's extension function, of which the Faculty of Extension is the main player.

The previous (1991) initiative left the campus community in a state of extreme anxiety and uncertainty, particularly in light of continuing messages of even tougher fiscal restraint by the provincial government with regard to the university's operating budget. It also appeared to give rise to an unaccustomed atmosphere of departmental protectionism and apprehension on campus as academics scrambled to protect the integrity of their existing funding and programs.

In 1991-92, however, the president embarked upon an additional and ambitious strategic planning process to chart the direction of the university for the ensuing decade. Revealingly, the mandate of the Strategic Planning Task Force set up to accomplish this task reinforced the right of the university's administration to continue to engage in structural change and selective budgeting notwithstanding the work of the Task Force. The report of this group Degrees of Freedom was released in 1993 and heralded by the administration as a vision for the university over the subsequent 10 years. It contained a new mission statement and seven principles to be employed in its realization. It also contained a series of suggested strategic initiatives, one of which was lifelong learning. The only mention of the Faculty of Extension in this report was as a possible source of innovative methods to permit the community increased access to the University.

The Faculty's reaction to this document was one of disappointment, in that the report's conception of lifelong learning seemed somewhat staid and there was no prospect of increased resources for the Faculty. The document also appeared at a time when the Faculty was being subject to a campus-wide enquiry into the Extension function of the University and it was feeling the effects of a drastically shrinking budget and falling enrolments.

The Faculty of Extension's uncertainty as to its future and the future of the overall extension efforts of the university was further heightened by the publication in 1994 of another major planning document authored by the President and his executive council, *Quality First*. Despite the existence of a continuing enquiry into the University's Extension function, of which the Faculty of Extension was a key element, it unwittingly found itself part of this document's recommendations. Specifically the report raised the possibility of the Faculty's becoming a "service unit" to facilitate the activities of degree-granting faculties. The possibility of all non-credit activities by the Faculty of Extension and other faculties being on a full cost-recovery basis was also raised. Additionally the report suggested that tenured and tenure-track Extension positions be relocated to other faculties to assist them in the development of non-credit programs using alternate means of delivery. The Faculty of Extension was not consulted in advance about these proposals.

In 1995, following almost four years of uncertainty, the Faculty of Extension finds itself considerably weakened financially, with low morale, and in a continuing state of ambiguity regarding its future. To what extent is this attributable to the Faculty's lack of ability to cope with an apparently more directive style of university planning and decision-making? The following sections examine this and related issues.

#### AN ALTERED PLANNING CONTEXT ON CAMPUS

Scholle and Denski (1994), in their work on media and culture comment on the rise of the New Right in the USA and its effect on the functioning of universities. In particular they comment on the curtailment of the university's traditional role as critic of social, industrial, and political structures. Using the state of Ohio as a particular example they document the emergence of managerial/bureaucratic techniques of control over higher education, with massive cuts in funding to state universities and the promotion of a restrictive economic and training agenda as their dominant role.

These authors also claim that there appears to be a loss of support for the more traditionally liberal role of the university and a concerted push to remake the academy on the model of the factory and as an arm of industry. Coincidentally, we see calls on the part of conservatives for the adoption of more corporate management styles in many Canadian universities.

Watkins (1992) cites Hall's use of the term "authoritarian populism" to explain the resurgence of "the hegemony of coercion in place of a rhetoric of harmony and consensus" (p. 255) in schools education in the UK. By this he means the attempt to mould public opinion and consent in pursuit of the reform of education by publicizing widely its alleged shortcomings and by suggesting a more authoritarian administrative approach as a way of remediating it (Watkins, 1992, p. 225). Transplanted to the university setting, one can see how what Watkins terms the promotion by critics of more coercive but real-world solutions to organizational problems, as opposed to the idealistic but impractical collaborative and consensual

forms of decision making customarily imputed to educators, has altered the culture of academic life.

There is ample evidence that the province of Alberta has to a large degree mirrored this shift to the right. The past four years have seen the election of an ultra conservative provincial government devoted to the reform of mainly social services, education, and health. Under the banner of fiscal responsibility and quality reform, the provincial government has embarked on a massive reduction of the public sector in Alberta and has promoted privatization on a scale previously unimagined. The province's universities, and the University of Alberta in particular, have suffered significant budget cuts and criticism of their alleged lack of relevance to society, in particular to the job market.

To a large extent this shift to the right and the assault on the integrity and fiscal viability of the university in Alberta society appears to have both caught University of Alberta faculty by surprise, and to have paved the way for far-reaching and rapid reform in the institution.

Unaccustomed to playing a political role in pursuit of its goals, poorly protected in institutional policy, and already in turmoil from the arbitrary budget and position cuts imposed upon it in 1991, the Faculty of Extension was ill-equipped to cope with the turbulent planning context of the years from 1991 to 1994. Additionally, the Faculty found itself marginalized because of its lack of degree programs.

Perhaps most damaging of all, the Faculty permitted itself to be tied up in a protracted enquiry into the campus extension function, 1992-94, while at the same time having to expend extraordinary energy in preserving its very structure.

The result was an inability to influence the rapid reform process occurring on campus and over which the Faculty of Extension had even less influence than almost any other group on campus.

#### CRITICISM OF STRATEGIC PLANNING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

The strategic planning process previously described left the University of Alberta and particularly its Faculty of Extension in a state of considerable shock and uncertainty. Despite claims by the administration that the process was representative there is considerable evidence that faculty and staff did not support this view. Following the production in 1993 of the draft, core strategic planning document, *Degrees of Freedom*, the Academic Staff Association criticized it for its lack of openness, for the absence of a representative vision statement, and for its neglect of the collegial decision making processes of the University. Additionally they claimed that it represented a style of top-down management and the views of a small number of vice-presidents only.

The Faculty of Extension filed a response heavily focused on an expansion of the concept of lifelong learning and the possibilities of alternative delivery systems. There was no direct feedback to the Faculty, and while some modifications were made to the draft report it was eventually adopted by the University with few substantive philosophical changes.

Mintzberg (1994) points out the fallacy of top-down control and centralized strategy making in professional organizations. He makes useful distinctions between strategic thinking, strategic acting, and strategic planning, noting in particular the locus of responsibility for these functions. Mintzberg observes that in the professional organization, such as the university, "The direct influence of



administrators is often restricted to strategies of support, and together with the operating professionals, they tend to enter into complex, interactive processes of collective choice that take on collegial as well as political colorings" (Mintzberg, 1994, p. 406). He goes on to observe that in this kind of organization much of the strategic analysis is conducted not by staff planners, but by the professionals themselves, and not for the purpose of central control and coordination, but as a key element of collective decision making.

Nevertheless, in the case of the University of Alberta, the president (1993) went on record to reinforce the role of the vice-president, academic in its strategic planning and claimed that "The Vice-President is in a position to make recommendations, which, while in the best interests of the University, could only come with great difficulty from the individual faculties" (University of Alberta, 1993, p. 6).

#### FACULTY OF EXTENSION RESPONSE

It should also be noted that the Faculty of Extension had no direct representation in the major campus strategic planning process. The Faculty's line of report is through its Dean to the vice-president, academic. The vice-president, academic had also set up (1992) a campus wide sub-committee, Broader Horizons, to enquire into the university's extension function (notably the Faculty of Extension) and the Faculty was discouraged from engaging in any public lobbying or political behaviour, ostensibly on the grounds that it would prejudice the subcommittee's work.

Furthermore it was pre-occupied with a rapidly declining base budget and had set in place two internal task forces to attempt to adjust to the internal and external problems this had caused, notably support staff losses and declining enrolments mainly attributable to increased fees and vastly reduced government and private sector training expenditures.

However, at the prompting of a small core of Extension faculty members, a Faculty committee was set up by the Dean to examine various internal restructuring scenarios for the Faculty. It was also envisaged by the committee's members that the scenarios devised by this group should form a major part of the data submitted to the Broader Horizons subcommittee. This was clearly meant as an attempt to influence the conceptions of the extension function that the subcommittee might arrive at. Following approximately a year's work and the production of a comprehensive set of options for a re-vitalized Faculty of Extension, the committee recommended that its report be submitted to this sub-committee. The Dean of the Faculty decided, however, not to submit the Faculty's recommendations but to await the sub-committee's recommendations.

#### MAIN OUTCOMES OF STRATEGIC PLANNING AFFECTING THE FACULTY OF EXTENSION

The findings of the campus subcommittee Broader Horizons were unfortunately pre-empted by the publication in February 1994 of another radical planning document, Quality First. In this, the Faculty found itself identified -- without consultation -- for possible decentralization and with the possibility of even greater financial liability through the loss of its remaining base budget support.

In May 1994 the Broader Horizons sub-committee into the campus extension function published its report, a good deal of which concerned the Faculty of Extension.

The report highlighted the lack of an overall clear mandate which defines the role of the continuing education/extension function within the University, and the lack of a



defined institutional commitment to lifelong learning. It called therefore for the strengthening of the institution's policy commitment to continuing education and extension activities and suggested the equivalent of an Associate Vice-President position to energize the function. However, concerning the question of additional resources to enable a re-vitalization and expansion to occur, the report stated that "most [recommendations] would not be feasible without radical changes in our existing operations, and a shifting of priorities away from our mainstream programs, which we do not advocate" (University of Alberta, 1994, p. 14). Given that the Faculty of Extension was recognized in the document as probably the most important of the Extension providers on campus, its personnel found the equivocal tone of the report highly disappointing and ironic. When coupled with the implied threats to the Faculty's integrity raised in the February, Quality First document and the extremely volatile climate on campus as a result of Quality First's recommendation to close one Faculty -- Dentistry -- and severely prune another -- Education, the Faculty of Extension felt extremely insecure. Most disappointing of all, it appeared that the Faculty's decision to allow academic due process to run its course had been a tactical error.

#### COERCION AND CONSENT

Based upon the continuing lack of clarity as to its mandate and a disproportionately reduced operating budget, it is evident that the Faculty of Extension has been singularly unsuccessful in exerting influence over university decision makers or its academic colleagues in pursuit of its future. Part of the reason for this may be explained with reference to the work of Foucault and Gramsci.

Scholle and Denski in reference to the assault on higher education in Ohio refer to the concepts of panoptic management and docile faculty. Borrowing from Foucault they discuss the metaphor of the panopticon or all-seeing surveillance which is also a judgment. The panopticon functions largely because the workers (faculty) accept a system of managerial/bureaucratic techniques of control which once accepted absolves them from any questioning of or resistance to their domination. By heightening the perception of crisis on campus, and there is ample evidence to substantiate such a tactic in the Alberta case, faculty and staff may be sufficiently disconcerted that they accommodate to increasingly directive and restrictive administration. Scholle and Denski (1994) document such a case in one state-funded communication department in the USA. This unit actually instituted a 30 percent increase in its own teaching load in order "to look like team players to the administration" (Scholle and Denski, 1994, p. 121) and to fend off a cut in its program. The authors comment that such a response amounts to a total denigration of pedagogy and the worth of education. Yet they claim that it is the prototypical response in such circumstances: "...act with the power, so as not to lose your place. Docile bodies, corrupted souls" (Scholle and Denski, 1994, 121).

Given apathetic, shocked, or essentially apolitical faculty, relatively unaccustomed to major social reform such as is occurring in Alberta, and bearing in mind the lack of unity in academic work, I contend that though perhaps unwittingly, most have become victims of the panopticon.

Watkins (1992) in a work on the politics of education in Australia employs Gramsci's concepts of hegemony of consent and coercion to explain power relationships. By hegemony is meant the exercise of control through moral and

intellectual leadership by a dominant class over other classes. Watkins (p. 253) quotes Williams (1977): "By the use of both coercion and consent, but mainly the latter, the dominant class uses its economic, social and intellectual leadership to present a universal and immutable view of the world." Notably, according to Watkins, society in Gramscian terms alternates between a hegemony of consent when collaboration and democratic decision making are at the forefront and a hegemony of coercion when more directive and authoritarian values prevail. He goes on to observe that these new directions of consent and coercion do not necessarily constitute recently formulated conceptions but a re-surfacing of ideologies which have lurked below the surface for a period of time.

My contention is that given the neo-conservative climate which has re-emerged in Alberta in the past three years, the change in presidential style at the University of Alberta in 1989, and the rapid deterioration of university finances, the campus social contract alternated quite precipitously and unexpectedly between one of consent and one of coercion.

It is also clear that the Faculty of Extension accommodated to these dynamics and failed to recognize the dangers associated with such a position.

It is interesting in the University of Alberta case to note that in the 1994 restructuring document, Quality First, the administration proposed to further curtail the involvement of academics in governance issues. It proposed a vastly streamlined academic decision-making process ostensibly as a way of simplifying the governance structure, saving money, and relieving faculty from the burden of governance activities in light of what the administration suggested were the greater priorities of teaching and research. This proposal, which was almost adopted, might be seen as an attempt by administration to further heighten its control over faculty and in accordance with the concept of coercion previously discussed.

Fortunately, the more contentious proposals in Quality First served to sufficiently alienate enough members of the academic community that they withdrew their apparently implicit consent and the key proposals, justified on the grounds of program quality and excellence but also generating approximately \$9 million in budget savings, were defeated.

#### IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE EXTENSION FUNCTION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

There is currently perhaps more confusion and apprehension on the part of the Faculty of Extension regarding the University's extension function than there was prior to the commencement of the strategic planning process in 1991-92. The Faculty's main criticism of the lack of a coherent policy framework for the overall campus extension function was recognized in the 1994 Broader Horizons report, and the sub-committee suggested a means of redressing this, however it reinforced a very conservative academic viewpoint regarding the status and importance of the extension function when compared to core credit or degree programs. Specifically it opposed the shifting of priorities away from the "mainstream" programs or what it termed any radical changes to existing operations. Given the present fiscal context in Alberta, this amounts to an almost insurmountable problem for the Faculty of Extension.

The Faculty further finds itself confused as to its future since the February, 1994 restructuring document, Quality First, raised various scenarios concerning its

decentralization, its relegation to a "service unit" role, and the possibility of its having to totally cost recover all non-credit activity. To date none of these issues have been resolved, the Faculty is having difficulty achieving its quite unrealistic budget target, and as a result has begun to terminate contract academic staff and other non-academic personnel. It has also been forced to curtail services to the public, to propose unit amalgamations, and to contemplate the possibility of discontinuing those programs -- notably Humanities and Fine Arts -- that are not major revenue generators. Significantly, academic faculty members are unable to devote much time to their own research in adult education owing to their preoccupation with the financial survival of their programs. Consequently the vulnerability of the Faculty in the eyes of unsympathetic colleagues and administrators increases.

## CONCLUSION

It is debatable, given the repressive economic and political climate of Alberta in the past few years, whether the Faculty of Extension could have fared better institutionally than it appears to have. One could contend, however, that the Faculty's policy of compliance in accommodating to the administration's initial (1991) massive reduction of its budget and confiscation of academic positions, was misguided. Not only did it damage the Faculty operationally, but more significantly it signaled to the campus community that the ideological balance on campus was being shifted from that of consent to coercion. In the process, the quality of the extension function at the University of Alberta and the future of its Faculty of Extension have been gravely jeopardized.

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# Learning to Control Democratically Ethical Questions in Situated Adult Education

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This paper begins with a theoretical framework (situated learning) developed by Lave and Wenger and builds on its metaphorical content in order to bring several ethical issues into focus, among them: the disempowering consequences of many training models, the anomalies of schooling as a vehicle for becoming a practitioner, and inconsistencies between the practices of higher education and adult education.

Learning theory in American adult education has emphasized the individual, frequently without regard for the myriad ways in which individuals are shaped by and shape society. As a consequence, an abundance of instrumental knowledge about learning has been generated with little emphasis on the social and political context of learning. A narrow focus on individual learning, rather than on the situated nature of all learning, has enabled the field of adult education to cast its net widely, catching within it many educators and trainers who work toward diametrically opposed social purposes: from progressive educators seeking social change to technicians seeking to adapt learners in a rigged game of social immobility.

On the plus side, debate surrounding Jack Mezirow's Transformation Theory<sup>1</sup> has drawn attention to the influence of social factors on meaning schemes and perspectives. However, unresolved is the logic by which perspective transformation reconstructs not only the Lifeworld, but also lived social conditions. Mark Tennant urges blurring the boundaries between the psychological (individual) and the social,<sup>2</sup> but needed is a theoretical framework which links the two.

## Situated Learning and Communities of Practice

Such a theoretical framework is proposed in the work of Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger<sup>3</sup> who reject individualistic and psychologistic theories of learning in favor of a more broadly social and contextual approach. They observe that all learning is situated not only in space and time, but also inextricably in relation to social practice. Learning, in their view, is "legitimate peripheral participation in a community of practice."

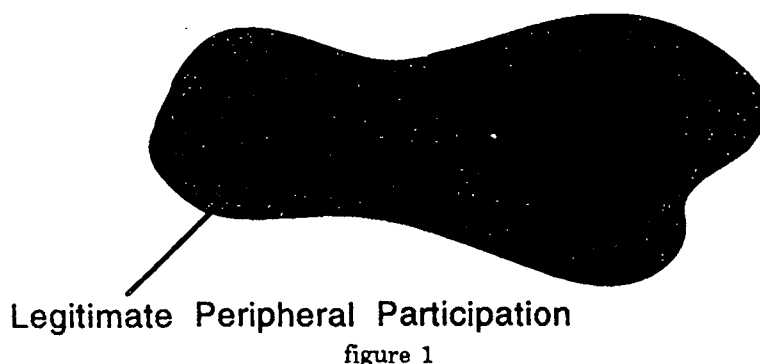
"Community of practice" is a broad characterization which encompasses all social relations. Communities of practice can range from guilds, unions, collectives or federations of workers (adult educators, carpenters, ministers, soldiers) to broader cultural communities (street-wise youth, Republicans, Eliza Dolittle in upper-class London). In each instance, a community of practice represents a negotiated set of relations among persons, their actions, and the world over time and in relation to other tangential and overlapping communities of practice.

The complexity of each person is described in reference to relationships within multiple communities of practice. Adult educator, citizen, parent, political activist



and other descriptors point to these relationships and comprise in total the complex identity of each individual. The structures of communities in which each of us participates set terms for our legitimate participation (licensure, apprenticeship, lifestyle conformities) and define and limit our possibilities for learning. These communities of practice provide an essential context for the social production of knowledge, as well as interpretative frames necessary for our making sense of the world. Knowledge and the world are mutually and dynamically constitutive. Learning is an individual's ongoing negotiation with communities of practice which ultimately gives definition to both self and that practice.

In this framework, all learning is apprenticeship.<sup>4</sup> For a child, learning is apprenticeship in an adult community. For a worker, learning is apprenticeship in a trade or craft. For a graduate student, learning is an apprenticeship in the academy. For each of us, learning is legitimate peripheral participation in a community of practice, whether it be in the context of training, literacy acquisition, community action or graduate education.



For Lave and Wenger, "legitimate peripheral participation" is an integral concept. (figure 1) All participation is peripheral and legitimate, but each term contributes a nuance to the meaning of a holistic concept. Legitimate points to the fluid, amebic, but nonetheless defined borders which separate "inside" from "outside." We can only join in the discourse, and thus learn, from within the community in which the discourse takes place and has meaning.

To participate on the periphery is, first, to recognize that there is no center, no magnetic core from which relations within communities of practice are defined and, second to emphasize the dynamic and at times chaotic energy which is experienced "on the edge,"—where the frenzy of transformative learning is more likely to occur.

Finally, all learning is participation—absorbing and being absorbed in the culture of practice, while at the same time acquiring both the competence and will to share in decisions which define that culture. Our participation can be either centripetal or centrifugal. Centripetal participation moves us inward toward more intensive participation so that our learning and work influences and becomes constitutive elements in the definition of the community. Such participation (learning) is empowering. On the other hand, centrifugal participation moves us outward, keeps us on the periphery, prevents us from participating more fully and is thus disempowering.

Legitimate Peripheral Participation as Metaphor



The framework developed by Lave and Wenger might or might not be compelling as theory, but clearly deserves further reflection and analysis in relation to adult education. As metaphor the image of peripheral participation in multiple, overlapping communities is both challenging and useful. Because of its emphasis on participation the metaphor is wholly consistent with claims about the relational and socially-produced character of knowledge and learning. It is also consistent with claims about the negotiated character of meaning and provides a basis for identification of adult education with a lifelong process of negotiation. Finally, as a metaphor it supports the dilemma-driven, engaged nature of all learning—the notion that we learn when we perceive relevance, when the object of our learning engages us and demands our attention—and we do not learn when we are otherwise engaged.

More importantly, the images associated with the theory of situated learning provide a basis for addressing critical, ethical and normative issues in adult education. As noted above, a narrow focus on individual—in-the-head images of learning—separates learning from its social contents, both the social relations which are reproduced in us and the transformative consequences of our learning on society. Learning, divorced from its situated context, is instrumentally identified as of positive value. All learning is “good,” in this limited view, and all effective pedagogical mechanisms for its nurture are to be encouraged. It is only when we attend to the situation of learning, in the interaction between and among learners, their actions, and the world, that ethical-normative issues become visible and that normative discourse becomes possible.

### The Empowering and Disempowering Consequences of Training

Learning should lead from peripheral to fuller participation—strengthening our influence and decision-making power within a given community of practice. Structures for peripheral participation—one of which is workplace education and training—may, on the other hand, serve to keep learners on the edges, reinforcing the dominance of old timers in a field over the encroaching aspirations of newcomers.

Work-related training can be limited to the transmission of technical and instrumental knowledge which keeps a worker “current” and maintains a workers position on the periphery.<sup>5</sup> Workers often struggle to maintain their peripheral status, having to run faster and learn more in order to stand still. Opportunities for apprenticeship can, in actuality, be a form of cheap labor which exploits workers under the pretext of continuing their education.

Often we are over-determined and oppressed by jobs. It is easy for our potential for learning to be constrained in the name of efficiency and productivity, but such constraints are illusory. Our productivity increases in direct proportion to our vested interest in the outcomes of our work. Maintenance of control at the core may be an aim of corporate leaders, but it is not in any way in the interest of those on the periphery whose loss of control and powerlessness inevitably diminishes their potential to contribute to production.

For those on the edges, the workplace remains potentially a primary site for learning and personal development. Adult education in relation to work should be transformative. It should infuse training with critical reflection on work at the periphery. It should problematize work experience, encourage collective solutions to problems of production, management and work conditions, and contextualize workplace problem-solving in relation to broader local, national and global communities of practice. The immediate aim of workplace adult education should be

to enhance the participation and influence of worker/learners in their workplace, but beyond this, adult education should facilitate the expansion of workers' otherwise narrow sphere of influence and concern.

### The Anomalies of Schooling

Schooling in general, and career-oriented graduate programs in particular, are predicated on claims that knowledge and learning can be decontextualized. Schools routinely sequester learners from other communities of practice, and to some extent prevent students from peripheral participation in communities of culture and work. Nonetheless, schools are themselves communities of practice, constituted by quite specific contextual elements. Without doubt, learning can take place where there is teaching, but intentional instruction is not in and of itself the principal source or cause of learning. Learning occurs, in relation to what is taught, only when two situational conditions are met:

- what is taught illuminates experience within communities of practice, and
- the meaning ascribed to what is taught captures a way of acting or a way of being which allows the learner to participate more fully in a community of practice.

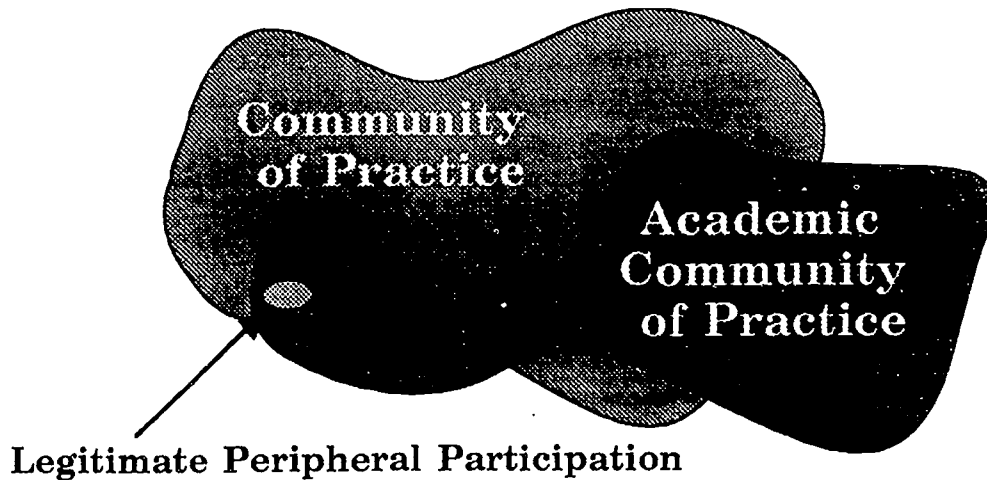


figure 2

Within the limits of these conditions, what is learned is always problematic in relation to what is taught.<sup>6</sup> Certainly, learning how to “do” school appropriately and expeditiously is a major part of what school teaches. Which is to say that in the context of schooling, we are all legitimate peripheral participants in a community of practice which is the school itself. The borders of this community might overlap other communities of practice—and specifically the communities of practice toward which teaching is directed. The borders of school and the borders of other practices are not coterminous and the motion from school to the Workworld or the Lifeworld is always problematic. (figure 2)

Since the 1940s, one mechanism for legitimizing peripheral participation within communities of professional practice has been the development of graduate programs within higher education. In adult education, as in other fields, normative concerns have focused on developing a field of study—a canon of prescribed and largely instrumental knowledge relevant to discourse within the community of practice. Practical knowledge—both theories and methods to live by—is not so much ignored,

as problematic within the context of schooling. Practical knowledge may or may not be directly addressed in the curriculum, but the acquisition of practical knowledge ultimately depends on learning situated elsewhere—in the context of actual practice.

This suggests avenues for exploration, especially among adult educators who have a vested interest in learning on the edges and special insight into the processes which promote fuller participation in communities of practice. Graduate programs in adult education should not be promoted as the “port of entry” for persons seeking to participate in the work of adult education, but rather as supportive forums for critical reflection on work already begun. Unfortunately, actively promoting and sustaining learning on the borders of work and citizenship is a form of peripheral participation sometimes dismissed as entering the field by the “back door.” Such work represents, in fact, the front door through which most of us have passed.

### Higher and Adult Education

The anomaly of using higher education as a vehicle for transmitting the culture of adult education becomes apparent when we attend to imbedded contradictions in these two divergent communities of practice. Of course the effort is generally made to inform higher education with a pedagogy more consistent with adult education, but the tension remains in the imposition of standards appropriate to a university, but questionable in relation to the practice of adult education. Practices appropriate within the culture of the university—grading, prescribing the content of learning, definitively arbitrating success or failure, devaluing experiential learning, promoting competitive models of learning—impose conditions for legitimacy which are inconsistent with self-defined principles of adult education, i.e. principles which have emerged in discourse within the community of practice.

To what extent has higher education, as guardian of legitimacy at our portals, reshaped and redefined adult education practice? Without question, much adult education has become more like schooling and in many instances is now school-based. Are we not more likely now to accept as adult education practice programming which mandates learner acquiescence and obstructs learner self-direction, training which reproduces hierarchical and oppressive relations in the workplace, and teaching which imparts to individuals decontextualized, basic linguistic and computational skills as a solution to their social problems?

Adult education might be unique among fields of study within the university in that its cultural legacy and mission (facilitating peripheral participation) includes tools for critical reflection on education as it relates to learning. Graduate students of adult education can be reflective critics of their own situated learning within the university, and not merely apprentices of an academic culture. Attention to the contradictions between higher and adult education should be a thread woven throughout a post-secondary, adult education curriculum.

### Afterword

The “learning on the edge” metaphor describes a space and time of tremendous energy and potential. On the edge is where learning is most vital, most urgent and creative. Without doubt, on the edge is where adult education not only finds its greatest challenge, but where adult educators are most likely to be engaged in their practice. The image of working “on the edge” suggests a new meaning for the

"marginality" attributed to the field—a meaning that is more positive and affirming of the social purpose and vision of adult education.

Adult education flourishes on the borders of countless communities, nurturing the seminal influence of newcomers, facilitating fuller and fuller participation in practice, and reinforcing shared decision-making and control. At its finest and most empowering, adult education is about the business of building democracy in communities of practice.

At the same time, adult education is a community of practice in its own right. It maintains borders with more or less rigidity, legitimizes certain ways of learning in relation to participation, and prescribes forms of discourse consistent with its self-proclaimed principles. But in an overarching way, adult education is permeated with marginality derived from its mission to work on the edges, peripheral to all cultures and practices—superimposing a process of respectful discourse leading to responsible action on every community of practice, including itself.

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<sup>1</sup> Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning. Jossey-Bass (San Francisco 1991).

<sup>2</sup> "Response to Understanding Transformation Theory," *Adult Education Quarterly*. 44:4 (Summer 1994).

<sup>3</sup> *Situated Learning*. Cambridge University Press (New York 1991).

<sup>4</sup> for example, see Seth Chaiklin and Jean Lave (eds.), *Understanding Practice: Perspectives on Activity and Context*. Cambridge University Press (New York 1993).

<sup>5</sup> cf Mechthild Hart, *Working and Educating for Life*. Routledge (New York 1992).

<sup>6</sup> Lave and Wenger, *op. cit.*



## Media, Technology, and Literacy in Immigrant and Multicultural Contexts

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**Abstract:** The impacts of electronic media on literacy, language, and cultural knowledge among immigrant and multicultural youths and adults in a diverse urban setting are addressed. We analyze electronic media consumption in terms of preferred forms and genres, social functions, support for maintenance of cultural identity, and education and information functions, concluding that media perform complex and unique functions for marginalized adult learner populations that merit much more serious consideration for adult basic education policy and curricula than they currently receive.

### I. Method

This paper integrates three ethnographic studies of media and technological literacy that were conducted with similar populations. Taken together the studies present over twenty case portraits of participants whose diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds range from Ethiopia to Nicaragua to Russia to Cambodia to Mexico to urban African America. Each study is briefly summarized below.

#### ***Study 1: Life at the Margins--How Low Literacy Adults Use Literacy and Technology*** (Merrifield, Hemphill, & Bingman, et. al., forthcoming)

This study compared six immigrant adults in California with six native-born adults in Appalachia in their everyday uses of literacy and technology. The California immigrant group, who are the focus of this paper, were from Cambodia, China, Ethiopia, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Russia. Multiple bilingual interviews, case portraits, and cross-case analyses were implemented. The study reports uses of literacy and language in the mother tongue and English, and their uses of technology, revealing high motivation and sophistication in use of video technology. Three important uses of video include: entertainment, reinforcement of cultural identity, and knowledge source about the dominant European American culture. In the latter function video serves as a technological surrogate for human interaction. Other findings include the experience of continuing sociocultural and economic marginalization.

#### ***Study 2: Acculturation in the Information Age--Functions of Television in the Lives of Newcomer Families*** (Raffa, 1994)

This project constructed portraits of refugee and immigrant families' uses of television. The approach entailed surveys and in-depth interviews with six families--three Latino and three Vietnamese--in their home lives. Findings suggest that in addition to its role as entertainer, television appears to function as a sociolinguistic surrogate modeling English language usage, and as a source of social knowledge, since most family members experience considerable social isolation. The study concludes that television serves significant educational functions that merit serious consideration for educational policy and curricula affecting newcomer populations. The study advocates the development of curricular and extracurricular activities within the schools and communities to promote the development of cultural



competencies in areas not presently addressed by existing educational programs, media literacy in particular.

### **Study 3: *Critical Thinking Skills Demonstrated by Young Minority Adults in Utilizing Electronic Media* (Ianiro, 1992)**

This study examined the critical thinking young minority adults bring to analysis of electronic media. The group consisted of five US-born African American, Latino, and Native American students in a community-based organization. Interviews were conducted and participants viewed videotaped television commercials, responding to questions covering six categories of media analysis. Responses were analyzed for critical thinking content. Results indicate extensive use of electronic media and preference for passive forms of entertainment and light genres, particularly those featuring minority characters. There was little evidence of problematization of media texts, limited ability to produce media texts, and lack of knowledge of the economic contexts of electronic media. There was evidence of critical insight when analyzing media representations, particularly stereotyping, and when contrasting television news portrayals of events to personal experience.

## **II. Analysis**

Meta-analysis across the three studies results in findings in four categories: Forms and Genres; Social Functions; Maintenance of Cultural Identity; and Education and Information Functions.

### **A. Forms and Genres**

#### *Forms of Electronic Media*

In **Study 1**, findings suggest differences in forms of electronic media employed in the country of origin and in the new culture. One of six had a television in the home country, and four of six were from rural settings where technology in the home consisted of manual implements. Upon arrival in urban North America, all quickly obtained televisions, five of the six had VCRs, and one participant reported three televisions and two VCRs. All displayed considerable technical sophistication in the use of their video equipment. By contrast, although three of the six had access to computers at home or at work, only two regularly employed a computer. One did so because her job required it, and another, a member of a younger generation, used a computer in school and video games at home. Reasons for differentiated use of common technological forms had to do with perceived practical payoff. Consonant with adult learning theory regarding the drive for practical application of knowledge, these adults all mastered the video technologies they believed had immediate utility in their lives, and they express confidence in their ability to master other new technologies they may need. By contrast, they see limited practical benefit in computer use, although if that view were to change, their use of that technology could also change. Limited literacy or limited English language proficiency did not appear to be an inhibiting factor in technology use.

In **Study 2**, all six immigrant families--three Latino and three Vietnamese--had a television in the home country, and all now have one or more televisions and VCRs. Living rooms are frequently arranged in "telecentric" fashion. Many indicated that they watched much more television now than they did prior to emigrating. The high degree of social isolation now experienced appears to

influence their high volume of television consumption. Television, complemented by VCRs and video game systems, is a central focus of their home lives, and the families' orientation to television is almost exclusively as consumers. The Vietnamese families in particular report an initial "television binge" upon their arrival in the United States, suggesting that the accessibility of new electronic media is often met with uncritical over-consumption.

The ubiquity of electronic media in the lives of the participants in **Study 3** is revealed by the high number of television sets and VCRs in homes and individual bedrooms. They averaged 3.8 televisions per household, and all owned video cassette recorders. All were able to operate every type of common household electronic media equipment, computers, video cameras, and video games. Participants also showed active interest in exploring and acquiring new types of electronic equipment and went to considerable expense to acquire equipment such as pagers, disc-jockey turntables, and sound mixers. A preference for passive forms of entertainment was prevalent, and television sets, video cassette recorders, and audio equipment far outnumbered interactive electronic media such as computers and video cameras. Young women reported lower levels of interest in video games than young men. This study presents a profile of sophisticated, highly motivated consumers of electronic equipment.

### *Genres of Electronic Media*

In **Study 1** and **Study 2** participants reported generally positive experiences with television in the North America. They displayed mixed patterns of viewing, to include extensive consumption of both native language and English language programming. There were clear age differences in stated preferences for English language programming among the **Study 2** participants. When asked about favorite English programs many Vietnamese adults responded with the names of channels rather than programs: "Channel 44...36...7." The randomness with which they select programs in English suggests that their relationship to English programming is not habituated. In contrast, the popularity of specific situation comedies is evident in all the homes with children in public school, perhaps because knowledge of such programs has been transmitted as cultural capital through the school culture. Overall, common favorite programs reported by Vietnamese and Latino families were *Cops*, *Animal World*, and local news programs: all television texts whose meanings are conveyed largely through visual rather than verbal information. One **Study 1** participant, however, whose level of English proficiency was relatively high, expressed a preference for daytime talk shows: "Always some aspect of American life is on." While there was some stated aversion to sexual explicitness and violence of some television programming, children's viewing appears to be generally unrestricted.

In **Study 3** participants preferred light television entertainment over news, information, educational, or arts programming. Situation comedies, games, and stand-up comedy shows were the most popular genres. One participant reported watching the news on PBS, one said she watches news, "if something important is on," and one watches sports news once a week. A breakdown of television program preferences by ethnic background shows that the three African American participants named as their favorite shows those that principally feature African American characters. The other two participants each chose one program with primarily African American characters. All participants also showed preferences for

family-oriented shows such as *Cosby* and *Rosanne*. Participants also showed a broad range of interest in music, with most citing five or more music genres. A young woman's response was typical of the group: "I like R 'n' B, and rap and you know, stuff like that. But I like a lot of kinds of music. Yeah, and um, classical sometimes. It's nice, it's OK. I like a lot of music." All together, nine musical genres were identified, with rap as a unanimous choice. Six movie genres were mentioned, with comedy a unanimous choice. Individual preferences ranged from two to five different genres, and the favorite genre for female participants was horror movies.

To summarize, we see considerable volume, intensity, and technical sophistication in the use of electronic media--particularly video--among all three groups studied. Immigrant participants display a marked preference for video over other electronic forms and limited discrimination regarding specific genres, preferring those that maximize visual content and minimize verbal content (news and drama), although there are generational differences. Native-born minority youths display a broadly eclectic set of preferences for electronic media forms and genres, including heavy interest in music and movies, in addition to video. They also display preferences in television programming for comedy and light entertainment, with limited interest in news programming. All groups display considerable interest in media forms and genres that represent their own cultures, languages, and experiences.

## B. Social Functions

**Studies 1 and 2** suggest that social isolation is acutely felt by both immigrant adults and children. Due to externally-imposed economic conditions and personal cultural preferences, immigrant adults work and live in contexts where they encounter few members of the dominant, European American culture in any significant way, and most relationships outside their own linguistic and cultural groups are with other immigrant or marginalized groups in the workplace or neighborhood. Most of necessity work in low-paying jobs that are economically marginalized, and most of their co-workers are other immigrants or from other marginalized groups. None eschew contact with native English speakers--all would greatly desire more of it, for they recognize the economic importance of enhanced English language and literacy skills. Yet at the same time they display a natural preference for living and raising their families in culturally and linguistically familiar contexts. Even after several years most of the families we studied have not yet formed any lasting relationships with native English speakers, and it is not for lack of trying. As one Vietnamese woman notes, "Here we don't have a relationship with the neighborhood. Quite different in Vietnam, quite different. Because we open the door every day in Vietnam. Here we close the door everyday." For **Study 1 and 2** participants school appears to be the primary site for direct interpersonal exchanges in English. Beyond the school environment, television affords the only other opportunity for direct--if electronically mediated--contact with the dominant, English-speaking culture. They have little other regular, meaningful contact with people they call "Americans" (white European Americans as seen on TV). Television, then, serves as a technological surrogate for community and human interaction.

The social functions of electronic media for **Study 3** participants differ somewhat. They employ electronic media not so much to create a surrogate for

community as to build a context within which to conduct their personal and social lives. They all prefer to socialize with friends rather than spend time alone using electronic media, but they are rarely forced to choose. Most often, they use electronic media while with friends and family. Using these media for them does not replace social activities; it permeates them. Participants' daily schedules, all strikingly similar, include electronic media use from early morning to bedtime. Before school, television and radio are used. At school, there is moderate use of computers and televisions in the classroom, and at least one participant listens to her Walkman at school. Directly after school, time is filled with solitary television viewing. In the late afternoon, the participants join friends or siblings and again activities almost always involve electronic media: listening to the radio with friends on the street corner, watching television at a friend's house, or going to a movie with a friend. Evenings often involve watching television with the family or listening to recorded music. **Study 3** participants' daily use of electronic media is thus best characterized as constant and pervasive, contributing an important texture to their lives.

### C. Maintenance of Cultural Identity

Electronic media are used by participants in all studies to support and maintain cultural identity. Participants in **Study 1** and **Study 2** rely heavily on native language television broadcast channels (in Spanish, Chinese, Khmer, Russian, and Vietnamese) and videos--obtained either through rental at stores in their communities or through mail from friends in the home country--to reinforce ties with their own cultural and linguistic communities. People watch videos made in their home country, finding them at their local video store, taping them off the air from native language television stations, or circulating them informally. One woman from Ethiopia gathers with other members of her community to watch videos from her homeland when word is put out that a new video has arrived by mail. The same woman, who is nonliterate in her mother tongue and English, also employs an audiocassette recorder to send and receive "letters" to friends and relatives: "It's just like how you would write a letter. I always start by saying greetings and go on to tell them about my life here and ask them how their lives are going." For those in

**Study 1** and **Study 2** who have very limited English proficiency, the uncertainty of a long-term future in the United States appears to influence television preferences for native language programming. On the other hand, those who express a desire for greater social participation and economic participation make a more concerted effort to watch English language programming for either language development or social knowledge. Immigrant children watch the most English language programs.

For participants in **Study 3** electronic media function in a related fashion. They use television to provide themselves with role models of their own ethnicity and with information about the dominant European American culture, therefore assisting in filling the experiential gap between their own cultures and the dominant culture. They prefer shows featuring characters from their own ethnic groups. One young African American woman reported, for example, that Oprah Winfrey was her role model. Music as well plays a key role throughout the day in reinforcing cultural identity.



## D. Education and Information Functions

Participants in **Studies 1 and 2** employ video and television extensively for second language development and as a source of social knowledge. All report using television for language development, primarily for vocabulary building and pronunciation. As one Vietnamese participant notes, "If we want to learn English we have both. One is read. The second is watch TV. Have the sound in your ears." While they do not consider television the optimal means of second language education, its ready accessibility is seen as a plus. We do not argue that television is always used systematically by immigrants for language development; it is often a byproduct of television viewing motivated by other purposes. Aside from the potentially beneficial uses of television for language development, there can be negative consequences. It has been observed, for example, that native language loss among immigrant families now occurs within one generation, as opposed to two generations in the past. Television may be playing a destructive role in this regard, to the detriment of the cultural integrity of the family.

**Study 1 and 2** participants also make use of television as a source of social knowledge about the dominant culture and life in their new country. All offer comprehensive accounts of their extensive reliance on television as a source of cultural information and insight. According to a Latino woman, "The TV gives us ideas as to how to live here," and a Vietnamese man notes, "If without TV limited to know American culture." Television fills a vacuum created by the immigrants' desire for authentic information about their new social realities coupled with the absence of familiar social networks they formerly relied on in their home countries. Consequently, the scale of interpersonal communication and televisual communication can become unbalanced in immigrant families' lives. There are also numerous troubling questions regarding the quality and function of information transmitted through the television medium, and we found little evidence of conscious critical media analysis on the part of immigrant television consumers.

**Study 3** also reports important findings regarding the education and information functions of electronic media among minority youths. As noted earlier, the genre preferences run to light entertainment, with only one participant reporting an interest in news programming. Interactions with media are largely passive, and participants have limited experience or confidence in their ability to produce media texts. Participants display little evidence of critical distance from media texts presented on television, and lack of fundamental knowledge about the economic context of electronic media hinders critical thinking about media agencies, categories, technologies, and audiences. Participants exhibit more evidence of critical thinking in the area of media representations, particularly stereotyping, than any other category of media. Strongest evidence of critical thinking is displayed when contrasting television news portrayals of events to personal experience of the same events.

In summary, these profiles suggest a high degree of unquestioning acceptance of media products and messages as naturally-occurring "givens," and the near absence of critical awareness within a pattern of voracious media consumption. Although **Studies 1 and 2** did not explore critical media analysis as deeply as did **Study 3**, none of the participants gave evidence of conceiving of media as constructed texts, nor of the economic, cultural, and political power structures within which electronic media function. Uncritical acceptance of media products far outweighed evidence of



critical analysis. This is particularly troubling given the heightened levels of media dependence evidenced by the groups in these studies.

### **III. Conclusions & Recommendations**

In conclusion, we advocate the development of adult learning opportunities that reflect in both form and content the issues we raise. In particular, we recommend the integration of strong, cross-cultural media literacy curricula into existing immigrant and literacy education programs so that learners may develop critical media interpretation skills to employ as a part of the intensive media consumption that clearly frames their lives. We also advocate employing the considerable multicultural electronic media base now in place to deliver innovative, culturally appropriate adult education programs. Specific recommendations include the following:

#### **A. Legitimize Media Literacy as a Component of ABE/ESL Curricula**

Media literacy appears essential for participatory citizenship in a democratic society. It is particularly salient for those marginalized or in the process of negotiating adjustment to the dominant North American culture. The current absence of mass media literacy from formal adult literacy curricula suggests that learners are on their own in making sense of the realities represented on the small screens in their homes. Understanding help-wanted ads, mailing letters, and filling out checks are important but fall short of the kind of literacy necessary to become engaged with the political and media institutions that may challenge the political and cultural well-being of marginalized groups. We urge that basic communication skills be reconceptualized to meet the communicative demands of the information age. We must better equip learners to make sense of the electronic barrage.

#### **B. Train Adult Education Practitioners in Media Literacy Pedagogy**

The participants in these studies have experienced formal education processes in which the mass-media saturated worlds of home and community are largely ignored. We teach what we know best, what we feel familiar with, competent and comfortable. If practitioners have never been exposed to media literacy in their own formal educational experience, how likely is it that they will consciously incorporate these literacies into their curricula? We must make the case to practitioners about the inordinately powerful influences of electronic media on marginalized groups, and we must provide access to media literacy pedagogies.

#### **C. Specific Curriculum and Instruction Recommendations**

A number of specific recommendations for media-related educational practice may be advanced:

- *Problematize Media Texts as Constructions*

Suggest to learners that all forms of media--to include news--are constructions that involve conscious decisions by humans who are unavoidably articulating a particular point of view.

- *Clarify Media Categories.*

Bring to the classroom a consideration of differing categories of programming, to include news, entertainment, and commercials. Note how newly emerging forms--infomercials and infotainment--are blurring these categories.

- *Teach About the Economic Dimensions of Electronic Media*

Make explicit to learners their own experience in the economic cycle of electronic media production and consumption. They are an audience, a product that is sold by networks to advertisers, and this relationship drives other dimensions of the process.

- *Contrast Learners' Experiences to Media Representations of Those Experiences*

The cognitive dissonance that can be created through this activity can lead learners to enhanced critical perspectives and better understandings of media constructions as contingent versions of reality.

- *Make Media Production Part of the Curriculum*

The experience of producing electronic media is an effective means of enabling learners to understand media texts as constructions--a crucial first step to critical analysis. As technological innovation continues, the inclusion of a media production component into ABE and ESL curricula becomes increasingly feasible.

- *Offer Linguistic and Schematic Handholds to Make Sense of Television Texts*

Teachers can aid learners to maximize the efficiency of their language development through television. They can review the television offerings at the beginning of the week to offer suggestions, weave assignments around television texts, create video resource lists or libraries to learn about American culture, and assist in locating programs of interest through a kind of "TV Guide Literacy," since many learners stumble upon programs by chance. All of these strategies can enhance control over media.

- *Employ bilingual and mother tongue language support*

Discussions of media, agency, power, and related topics are complex, adult-level issues that will benefit considerably from treatment in the mother tongue, rather than in some form of "sheltered," simplified English for non-native speakers of English.

#### **D. Rethink ABE and ESL Curricula to Provide Better "Insider Information" on the Dominant Culture**

A prevalent ideology in ABE and ESL literacy programming, functional competency, seeks to identify, transmit, and measure acquisition of the "lifeskills" needed by marginalized members of society to enhance their lives. Numerous critiques of this approach as overly reductionist have been advanced and need not be repeated here. However, the studies we report suggest a further critique of the functional competency approach, if it is constructed too narrowly. The people we profile--many who are graduates of competency-based adult education programs--still lack a framework for cultural interpretation that apparently has not been provided to them by a skill-based approach to competency identification, instruction, and assessment. We need to expand this instructional framework to be able to better offer the cultural capital--the "insider information" not always readily measurable as a competency outcome--to adult learners.

### **E. Revisit the Social, Community-Building Function of Adult Education in a Postmodern Information Age**

In the three groups we studied, there was strong reliance on video-based media for the performance of certain critical social functions that we would argue are better addressed through discursive human interaction in community. While the loss of human community and its mediation or replacement by electronic means might well be a dominant theme of life in late-twentieth-century North America, this phenomenon appears particularly critical in marginalizing the groups we profile. It has long been argued that adult education programs can serve as builders of new social communities. Many already do, often through accident rather than design. One has only to visit an ESL class in the evening in almost any adult education program in California to observe how many other social functions--from dating rituals to recipe sharing to male bonding--take place unaided in such contexts. With minimal added effort on the part of adult education program planners, these phenomena could undoubtedly be enhanced. We must thus revisit the potential of adult education as a social forum for the reconstruction of community.

### **F. Employ the Technology Base Now in Place to Deliver Adult Education to Marginalized Populations**

An important finding of the studies we report is the high degree of sophistication displayed by participants in their use of video-based technologies. We suggest that developers of technology-based educational programming pay careful attention to the ways that technology is used in people's everyday lives, to its cultural as well as pragmatic functions, and to the formats which make its use appealing. Programs could be developed using video as well as computer technology, in culturally sensitive ways. New video-based curriculum development seems particularly appropriate for immigrant populations.

### **G. Continue to Explore New Forms of Technology for Literacy Instruction.**

We must revise our conceptions of design and delivery of adult literacy education in a way that recognizes existing realities and technology bases, moving to transcend traditional conceptions of the delivery system. We must recognize that there are many more people who do not avail themselves of formal adult education than those who do. We should go beyond existing notions of school-based or tutor-based literacy learning systems to include decentralized home and family use. New multimedia and telecommunications technologies should be explored, at least in part, to enable learners to "jump over" the existing formal schooling system if it is not addressing their needs.

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## Fugitive and Codified Knowledge: The Struggle to Control the Meaning of Environmental Hazards

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**Abstract.** *The purpose of this qualitative research was to determine the ways that knowledge is constructed and used by four Pennsylvania emergent citizens groups (ECGs) engaged in environmental conflicts, and by the government environmental regulatory agency. It documents the struggle for who controls the meaning of hazardous scenarios. ECGs were cultural producers at the local level, while the state department constructed intellectual and moral capacity from a bureaucratic locus. As such, both were instrumental in community learning, as well as sites of contest. The results show that regulators most frequently constructed "official" knowledge that reproduced the status quo. ECGs constructed "fugitive" knowledge, based on collaborative learning. Bureaucrats did not use local knowledge to make environmental decisions. Citizens responded with rebellious collective action, quiescence and despair.*

**Introduction.** Life in post-industrial society means living in a chemicalized and polluted environment. Unlike any past period, the synthesis of chemical substances has caused increased exposure and related risks. Since there are multiple axes of interpretation around environmental hazards, social conflicts often arise over the meaning of risk, and how it should be managed.

A review of the literature suggests that knowledge construction by stakeholders in environmental conflicts is an under-investigated area. Few studies attempt to understand how regulatory agencies and grassroots emergent citizen's groups (ECGs) construct knowledge about local environmental issues, or how multiply constructed knowledge is used in decision-making and problem-solving. More importantly, few studies investigate who controls the meaning of hazardous situations. This research explores the contemporary battle over the control of meaning in risk scenarios, and the mechanisms utilized in that struggle.

**Materials and Methods.** Four historical-organizational/observational case studies of conflict dynamics involving ECGs and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources (DER) were undertaken. During a two year period, 1992-1994, the author attended 16 public meetings, totaling more than 60 hours of discussions between government regulators and citizens concerned about: hazardous waste lagoons, a low-level radioactive waste facility, a cogeneration plant, and a hazardous waste incinerator. The four ECGs were, respectively, Concerned Residents of the Yough, Inc. (C.R.Y.); a network of activist groups interested in PA's Low Level Radioactive Waste Facility (LLRWF) siting; a coalition of groups, headed by Stop Targeting Our People (STOP); and Organizations United for the Environment (O.U.E.).

All of the grassroots groups cited "education" as a goal of their organization. C.R.Y. is an activist group run largely by ethnic women from an old Appalachian coal mining town. It is dedicated to "educating villagers" (Bolef, 1994) to what members believe are the debilitating illnesses and death caused by living near hazardous waste lagoons. Numerous attendants at LLRWF siting meetings, such as the Blue Mountain Environmental Organization (BMEO), are engaged in

grassroots education. BMEIO believes, "with education, people can learn to fight for environmental, social, and economic rights." O.U.E. is a "watchdog" non-profit organization. During the time of this study, it focused on stopping a proposed hazardous waste incinerator. Their "Ban the Burner Campaign" reported they engage in "education and information" efforts around environmental topics.

Meeting minutes, public records, newspaper reports, ephemera such as organizational brochures, and recorded video tapes of meetings served as thick data texts. The intersection of structure and agency was explored in the analysis of public records and in researcher participation in community affairs. Since human agency includes "the events of which an individual is the perpetrator" (Giddens, 1984, p. 9), the records of events and direct observations are means to discover agency. Coding categories were developed. All data were organized according to the subjects' ways of thinking about: each other, outsiders, and events that constituted their lives. Structuration theory was used to integrate citizens' behaviors (agency) with structural constraints to change. This theory permits the investigation of a range of responses produced by the interplay between agency and structure in environmental conflicts (Aronoff & Gunter, 1992). Here it is used to understand the activism of community members that challenged deterministic, empirically based regulatory decisions.

**Findings.** "Codified" or "official" knowledge prescribed the beliefs and norms that were promulgated and monitored by specialists of the dominant culture. This mainstream knowledge was produced by members of educational, government, legal, and medical institutions, the political elites. It was always oriented toward social unity, continuity of existing institutions, and loyalty to the status quo. It was ahistorical, acultural and asocial. Environmental bureaucrats constructed knowledge in "ideal" terms premised on narrow standards. This official knowledge protected existing values and views of reality derived from imagined, abstract communities of the larger political sphere. In all four case studies, regulators built knowledge that was positivistic and techno-rational. Information was based on mathematical equations, established cancer rates, measures of morbidity and mortality, and models of failures and accidents. Realist codes defined official knowledge, fashioned claims to non-partisan objectivity, gave the impression that no explanation was necessary, and criticism was unwarranted. This disempowering discourse caused citizen agency to be diminished, made resistance behavior seem inappropriate, and subverted democracy. Government decisions were often made on less-than-rigorous scientific data. One DER attorney has written that ethical questions, embedded in environmental problems, are hidden or distorted in scientific and administrative methodologies and communications (Brown, 1987). Yet, the staff never appeared to base decisions on this knowledge. DER's own toxicologist, commenting on the lack of rigor in one investigation, wrote, "Obviously [it] was purely descriptive and not analytical....It almost seems as if the study was predetermined to find nothing....P.S. I think the citizens may have a legitimate concern" (Harper, 1989). Official documents conveyed what social reality should be like, not what citizens experienced.

"Fugitive" knowledge, on the other hand, escaped the control of the specialists. It was generated by grassroots folks who understood that meaning was complex, conflicted, and ambiguous. They displayed fewer constraints binding their belief systems than did the political elites, a characteristic found in other ECGs

(Burt & Neiman, 1987). Group knowledge in all case studies was situation-based in concrete ways. That is, it was produced in a specific social, historical and cultural context. Factors that gave meaning to the four risk scenarios included: the weakness of regulatory and industry management structures, the communities' memories about DER and industry, justice issues, the communities' beliefs in the right to self-determination (environmental democracy), ill-conceived hazard data collection by regulators, the belief that data was misused and manipulated by regulators and industry, the communities' standards for their homes and neighborhoods, and weakness in the regulators' belief that engineered solutions should supersede pollution prevention. Popular knowledge, based on views of reality from first hand experience, protected autochthonous values and rights.

Significant differences existed in the meanings given to toxic or hazardous situations by regulators and ECGs. The ways that knowledge was constructed by the two entities was equally disparate. All four case studies verified the maxim, "the way we know has powerful implications for the way we live" (Palmer, 1987, p. 22). The relationship between the knower and that which was known became the relationship between the living person to the world itself. This resulted in confrontational dynamics for legitimization of the constructed knowledge. This struggle led to the question of who would control the meaning of the environmental situation. The makers of official knowledge sought to bring local knowledge in line. They attempted, usually successfully, to delegitimize it. When this was not possible, they appropriated, redefined, and reformulated fugitive knowledge, imbuing it with dominant meaning. It was under these conditions that environmental policies and decisions were crafted.

**Non-responsiveness, rebuttal, and harassment.** One mechanism for the control of meaning was non-responsiveness to citizen-generated information that would have set a broader agenda and allowed better decisions. For example, C.R.Y. members' repeated requests that fluorine, a toxic component of local waste treatment, be evaluated as a source of problems were ignored. The logic of the request was supported by Cornell University bone tests on cattle that had died in the vicinity of the lagoons. "Definite overt fluorosis" was evident, with "definite clinical fluoride intoxication" found in cows having loads similar to those in the dead animals. The disregard of citizens was interpreted as exertion of raw power. Non-responsiveness also took the form of untimely investigation or no investigation of citizen-reported pollution events. Where repeated requests met silence, the petitioners eventually stopped asking, robbing them of agency. This rhetoric of containment (Kaminstein, 1988) allowed regulators to avoid particular kinds of questions and to pursue their own official agenda.

It was not uncommon for citizens to perceive "unnatural" changes in their familiar world. They portrayed pollution as casting a spell on nature. On numerous occasions, members of STOP painted vivid verbal pictures of anomalous snow events at a facility associated with the proposed cogen plant. It snowed on winter mornings and star-filled evenings when meteorological reports cited clear skies in the county. Equally, C.R.Y. members recited a litany of unnatural artifacts or events they believed were caused by vapors from open toxic lagoons. These included a tree "where a maple leaf was no longer a maple leaf," spontaneous cattle abortions and death, and the death of a family's three show dogs. One opined that "when the dogs went, it destroyed the family." Other reports of aberrant happenings included

the loss of fur on cats and dogs, tumor development in animals, and an assortment of medically undiagnosed ailments in humans. One member remarked that when dogs walked across a contaminated ball field, their feet developed sores. In very rare instances, regulators investigated these accounts. The routine response was to minimize the significance.

Glib department rebuttal was sometimes a response. The death of 106 cattle in a ten month period, from a 182 commercial beef herd grazing 200 yards from the lagoons, prompted an official to flatly state, "There are problems....But we have no evidence it's killing those cows" (Dillman, 1985, p. 8). Folks reported that tests, often inconclusive or contradictory, were the basis of DER rebuttals; dialog was thwarted. Scientific claims were used to counter local knowledge, cutting off discussion. Steeped in science, certainty was linked to truth, and truth needed neither defense nor accountability. The assertion (Habermas, 1970) that conflict is due, in part, to the systematically distorted communication of science which prevents consensus on political issues was corroborated.

Both DER and ECGs reported harassment and intimidation by the other. Citizens fighting the toxic waste lagoons reported anonymous phone calls, the possible murder of a local leader who wanted the facility investigated, dismissal of a newspaper reporter, and vandalism of protest signage. As a means to raise money, C.R.Y. sold hoagies and pizzas. Members believed that investigations for sales tax fraud on such fund raising activities, and the requirement to purchase a small-gaming license to sell raffle tickets, were acts of official vexation. They reported that state officials "turned their heads" when local civic and religious groups engaged in comparable operations. Some supporters believed they were targets of "stepped up" environmental enforcement as a way to harass them.

**The polar issue of community health.** As producers of fugitive knowledge, citizens were "popular epidemiologists" and "intuitive toxicologists." They detected and acted on environmental hazards, resulting in clashes with officials over problem definition, health study design, interpretation of findings, educational content in materials, and policy application (see Brown, 1993). C.R.Y. members polled households to construct a cancer registry that was juxtaposed with a government health study. Citizens reported 172 cancer deaths in a community of 1,100 people in two decades. Their statistics showed an 80% cancer death rate, well above the national average. They were quick to point out their health maps displayed cancer clusters, while official studies, based on a diffuse geographic range, revealed no significant findings. They seemed to intuit the regulatory attitude that there are times "when best scientific judgment indicates [an epidemiological study] is not appropriate" (Westrum, 1991, p. 593). Recognizing that citizens educate themselves very rapidly in hazardous waste issues, it has been suggested that "sometimes the community goes astray" (p. 593). The misdirected application of the community's power is termed "political epidemiology" by officials. In the event the citizens are recalcitrant, it is suggested that state regulators, "invite [them] to your office...and make your department seem as human as possible" (p. 595). Controlling the questions that are asked, and the problems that are selected, are primary mechanisms used to direct the construction of meaning toward the mainstream.

**Constructing the image of "the other".** ECGs perceived regulators as outsiders, insensitive, uncaring, lacking a conscience, uninformed, unjust, flagitious, and



narrow. Conversely, regulators saw ECGs as selfish, illogical, irrational, ignorant, emotional, and ancillary to decision-making. When discussing these characteristics with C.R.Y. members, one remarked, "At one time we were illogical, but not now. We got educated!" Regulators chose to ignore research (Wandersman & Hallman, 1993) that shows citizens' risk perceptions, although not matching scientific estimates of risk, are not necessarily irrational. During one meeting of C.R.Y. it was mentioned that regulators thought grassroots individuals were "emotional." The group erupted "We are! We are!" Numerous individuals described feelings of anger, sadness, and frustration. This led into a long period of reminiscing about acts of resistance that gave voice to their rage. ECG meetings were sites of education, emotional venting and a way to deal with communitywide stressors (see Bachrach & Zautra, 1985). Identity formation for both officials and ECG members seemed to draw on images that each created of "the other."

Environmental degradation was seen as a result of the nefarious behavior of irresponsible, unjust regulators. ECGs self-identified as burnt offerings for the needs of industry. Environmental justice emerged in all case studies. Words like power, greed, arrogance, and money were frequently a part of the community lexicon. As knowledge producers, the groups constructed strong cultural biases toward industry as well as government. As one respondent put it, "The big fish always eat the little fish." C.R.Y. expressed that their community was a "sacrifice zone" in the complicity of government with industry.

**In different tongues.** Language was often a site of struggle since it interpreted the discourses. Because of the differences in the meaning surrounding environmental situations, citizens and regulators spoke in antithetical tongues. At one C.R.Y. meeting a citizen remarked, "In some ways we speak a different language." The language of government regulators, scientists, and industry people appeared to exonerate past or anticipated decisions and policies, and functioned as a mordant to solidify environmental laws and regulations, thus privileging officials. Although many "facts" were presented by regulators when pressed to perform official duties, they were seldom accompanied by interpretations or explanations. For example, in one community health study, 16 statistically elevated medical conditions were reported. Information necessary to conclude that the data were clinically significant, rather than clinically insignificant and non-specific was never provided. This prompted the DER's toxicologist to question "what health effects would have been accepted as significant and specific?" (Harper, 1989). Although citizens defined "significance" for themselves, dialog was impossible without a government view point.

The emotional state of communities. Each of the four case studies revealed different emotional textures that pervaded the groups. For instance, in gatherings of C.R.Y. the descriptors "cry" and "crying" gave expression to the deep sadness members felt. Upon mentioning the repetition of this theme, one person said, "You're right. There is a pall over this community." Probing this revealed deep communal sadness over "all the deaths here." The name of their ECG was an outward expression of an inward disposition. The coalitions centered around STOP and the LLRWF network, on the other hand, were characterized by high energy, deep technical inquiry, a thirst for information, urgency in becoming a part of decision-making, and ways to capture media attention. STOP communications

often used the language of a nascent grassroots organization. O.U.E. documents evidence rage and defiance. During the study the developer announced withdrawal of its application for a proposed waste incinerator. Yet, members vowed to fight-on despite "a lot less of that 'Go get 'em feeling' " (Frederick, 1994) in the group.

**The burden of proof.** On numerous occasions the burden of proof was placed on communities. For example, the Governor of the state, the Secretary of DER, and numerous regulators challenged C.R.Y. to find a "completed pathway" that would unequivocally link substances in the lagoons to human exposure. The term "pathway" took on mythical proportions in the community and became a major source of frustration. The elusive search for a "pathway" allowed regulators to commandeer the discussion and served to divert members from their original goal to close the facility. After more than eight years of searching for the "holy grail," citizens had their fill, prompting one to write, "Why not stop the pretend mumbo-jumbo of so-called 'scientific' health studies... [and] your idiotic broken record of 'no-pathways'...." Even the media took on the rhetoric of "the pathway." One major newspaper would append the disclaimer on letters to the editor, "No legal or scientific connection has been made between a nearby waste disposal operation and health problems."

**Unequal education.** All four case studies revealed that ECGs were concerned about the educational materials produced by officials, including government, industry, and academia. The LLRWF meetings produced the strongest grassroots response to what was called "unequal education." Citizens repeatedly stressed that the "downsides" of technology were never included in official information. They demanded that the educational agenda incorporate data on the uncertainties, the experimental nature of technologies, and alternatives that represented fair and just choices. It was apparent to ECG members that information "left out" biased the discourse in favor of official ways of knowing. ECGs repeatedly called for a diversity of views. Their suggestions went well beyond the bounded curricula of government officials. The discussion often was not about "truth" but about "power." Citizens wanted not only the inclusion of local knowledge, but also mainstream information that was avoided by regulators.

**Resistance behavior: rupturing the code.** Conflicts concerning who would control the meaning of environmental hazards resulted in acts of resistance by ECG members. Environmental hazards became "critical situations" that disrupted the community familiarity or "ontological security" that characterized everyday life. Three of the four ECGs engaged in rebellious collective action. Citizens behaved knowledgeably, based on the meaning they gave to risk events. Collective behavior included, letter writing, petitioning, marches, protests, rallies, mock marriages and mock trials, blocking roads, hanging effigies, lawsuits, and civil disobedience resulting in arrests. As formulated by Giddens (1984), the social systems did not exist outside of some form of action. Members and supporters of ECGs were aware that structural properties were involved in the production and reproduction of the dominant, and in their view oppressive, social system. ECG resistance attempted to break the mechanisms of control to regain the texture of everyday life. In conversations with C.R.Y. members, many constructed a bucolic past to which they yearned to return. Collective action ruptured the code spoken by officials in

government, academia, and industry. It called attention to alternative views of environmental risks and alternative solutions to local problems. In the absence of resistance, quiescence or despair set in. When members of C.R.Y. were asked, "What will it take for your point of view to be heard?" one respondent said, "I suppose I'll have to go up there (referring to the toxic lagoons) and pour gasoline on myself, and set myself on fire." This was followed, after a brief silence, with "No! It would take about 12 of us to do that to get any attention."

**Iterative re-learning: moving out, dropping out, getting sick, dropping dead.** Organizational meetings, conferences sponsored by others, classes and workshops, and networking were opportunities for learning. Meetings were especially important for sharing social awareness, and articulating, reflecting upon and galvanizing the meaning of the groups' experiences. All groups turned to the strengths of members or supporters for educational leadership. Thus, a nurse or physician would become the local, inside expert on health effects, or a neighborhood chemist would serve to decipher complex technical jargon. These knowledgeable peers functioned as gateways for new, text-based information that was grist for the communal mill. Conversely, outside experts functioned as gatekeepers of similar information, always tailoring its application and use to fit official codes. Technical information, introduced by inside experts, was appropriated by the community and placed at the service of local interests. Power and authority in the learning setting were distributed among all ECG members. Through common inquiry, knowledge was constructed in the context of the community. For C.R.Y., group memory and the gateway capacity of local experts was lost when members moved away, dropped out, got too sick to be involved, or, as one person put it, "dropped dead." An individual reported, "They wear us down." A major barrier to cultural production was the loss of community memory. Details of the historical facts were lost as people were lost, powerfully advantaging regulators.

**Conclusion.** The four ECGs were sites of cultural production for intellectual and moral values developed through collaborative learning processes. Local knowledge producers engaged in a contest with outsiders who propagated and monitored mainstream knowledge. Citizens constructed ifugitive knowledge that struggled to escape the control of institutional specialists. All of the groups engaged in resistance behavior and/or rebellious collective action to gain a voice in the public domain. Under heavy pressure from various hegemonic mechanisms, citizens struggled to generate and retain local meaning. The indigenous discourse, ultimately, never received recognition in regulatory decision- and policy-making processes. Without a voice, local meanings attributed to environmental hazards were omitted in the larger political sphere. In one scenario, the loss of group members meant a dissolution of local folks as cultural workers. Social constructions of the meaning surrounding environmental risks were, in the end, about power and politics. The four case studies showed that codified knowledge was the sole basis for moving the government environmental agenda "forward."

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## Britain's Forgotten Minister of Adult Education: Arthur Creech Jones and a Socialist Strategy for Development and Democracy in Africa

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*Abstract: Creech Jones is the only major British Minister who has made adult education central to his policies. His outstanding contribution to adult education policy and practice has been unjustly ignored in adult education literature.*

With some trepidation, I attempt in this paper to rescue Arthur Creech Jones from an unjustified obscurity. If Adult Education has a pantheon, he deserves a place in it. The odds, however, seem weighted against me. My enterprise smacks of the 'Great Men' school of history; and I argue the case for a Dead White Male whose main contribution was (arguably) to the development of colonialism. A critic of colonial policy, Creech Jones rather improbably found himself the chief Minister in charge of colonial policy when the British Empire was at its zenith. The course he chose was a difficult one. He set self-government as a clear aim of British policy. But the colonial power should not impose self-government willy-nilly: a proper political and economic foundation had to exist. The paradox of colonialism was that such a foundation could be created and sustained only by members of the colonised society: without them neither economic, social nor political progress could be achieved.

As Secretary of State for the Colonies, Creech Jones presided over 80 million people and 4 million square miles, chiefly in Africa, America and Asia. On leaving office in 1950 he was feted as the greatest Colonial Secretary since Chamberlain (MN). His significance for adult educators stems primarily from this work. He played the pre-eminent role in designing and executing perhaps the most important attempt anywhere to bring adult education to the centre of social, political and economic development policy. This is a major claim, both for Creech Jones and for his policies. If even partly valid, he is entitled to a more substantial place in the history of adult education than he currently has. It is not just a matter of personal recognition: colonial practice, a central area of twentieth century adult education experience, has been unjustly and unwisely ignored. This paper outlines important elements of the case for Creech Jones.

**Biography.** Arthur Creech Jones was born in Bristol, England, in 1891, the son of a journeyman printer. After studying leaving school he studied in evening classes for junior clerks' exams, and entered the Civil Service in 1907. In the turbulent years before the Great War he moved from Methodism to humanism and socialism. In 1913 he joined the Independent Labour Party and helped form a Trades and Labour Council. He campaigned against wartime conscription and was imprisoned 1916-19, using these years for private study. On release, he was again active in the trade union movement. He quickly became Secretary of the National Union of Docks, Wharves, and Shipping Staffs which amalgamated to form the Transport and General Workers' Union in 1922. Aged just 31, he was appointed a national secretary of the TGWU: close to one of British trade unionism's most powerful figures, Ernest Bevin, TGWU general secretary. A career as a major union leader seemed assured.

His relationship with Bevin was later to prove invaluable, but in the 1920s, for a senior trade union official, he developed a range of esoteric interests. In 1921 he joined the management committee of the Workers' Travel Association (WTA); in 1923 he became a governor of Ruskin College. From 1926 he began a deep association with colonial affairs, organising a network of advisors for Clements Kadalie, leader of a South African trade union. Creech Jones's handbook, *Trade Unionism Today* (1928), written for the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) was much used in developing colonial unions. In 1929 he left his union post to take up the organising secretaryship of the WTA, where he remained until elected as a Labour MP in 1935.

In Parliament, Creech Jones played a key role in developing Labour's colonial policy. He was also quickly co-opted onto the Colonial Office's Education Advisory Committee (ACEC) and played a key role in its work. In 1940 he founded the Fabian Colonial Bureau (FCB), which became central to Labour colonial policy during the 1940s. He was parliamentary private secretary to Bevin, the Minister of Labour (1941-45). Appointed a junior minister at the Colonial Office when Labour gained power in 1945, Palestine so dominated the Secretary of State's time that Creech Jones was *de facto* in charge of the rest of the colonial Empire; a year later Creech Jones himself was promoted Secretary of State.

The remainder of this paper centres on Creech Jones's work at the Colonial Office (1945-50). His later life can be briefly summarised: defeated at the general election of 1950, he continued his work on colonial questions and his interest in adult education. A Vice President of the WEA, he chaired its working party on Trade Union Education. An MP again (but in Opposition) 1954-64, he died in 1964. (This brief biography is based chiefly on Pugh 1981; see also Goldsworthy 1971; Holford 1994.)

**Labour's Post-war Colonial Policy.** The 'central purpose' of Labour's post-war policy for the colonies was 'to guide the colonial territories to responsible self-government within the Commonwealth in conditions that ensure to the people concerned both a fair standard of living and freedom from oppression from any quarter' (Cmd. 7433 1948: 1). Nor was the statement of policy merely pious. At the Fabian Colonial Bureau's inaugural conference in 1941, Creech Jones asserted (as Chairman) that 'advance toward self-government was only achieved by forcing the British Government's hand ...' (Pugh 1984: 192). From 1945, Creech Jones was the major player: the Colonial Office now planned for self-government in Africa within 25 years (Gupta 1983: 100).

In prioritising self-government, Creech Jones referred to 'conditions'. Achieving reasonable economic prosperity and freedom from oppression was neither assumed, nor some kind of test which colonies had to pass. They were to result from specific policies. Political and economic institutions had to be created; attitudes and skills had to be fostered. Policies were to contribute in various ways. Co-operatives would improve farmers' access to markets, and at the same time develop business attitudes, co-operative approaches, and skills in and commitment to democratic procedure. Together with publicly-owned marketing boards, they would help ensure that profits from local production were retained in the colony concerned, and used to the public benefit. Local government would develop knowledge of democratic procedure, and knowledge of the problems of administration. Trade unions would develop collective approaches and defend workers against exploitation by the

capitalist enterprises which were both a reality of colonial life and necessary to economic development (Lee 1967: esp. 111-27; MN).

These policies were innovative. They built on Creech Jones's intimate knowledge of colonial affairs—through his work with the FCB, the TUC, and the ACEC, and through energetic nurturing of informal contacts and friendships with members of colonial trade unions, and nationalist and left-wing movements, he knew more of many colonies than his civil servants. They reflected his Fabian socialist commitments and approaches: he was interested in detail rather than general theory; he saw society in terms of institutions; he worked happily with existing structures, believing they could be influenced to new ends. Creech Jones's colonial policies also, of course, reflected the Labour commonsense of the time: publicly-owned corporations, co-operation, and so forth.

There was more to Creech Jones's strategy than a battery of policies, however innovative. What marked his approach was a genuine concern for, and awareness of the importance of, the 'human element'. This was reflected at several levels. But above all he saw that colonial societies' development, both political and economic, depended upon their own peoples. Speaking to a 1948 conference, he made an unambiguous statement of his views:

Looked at by any real standard of values ... it is less important that there should be a village school than that the people should have the initiative, not only to want a school and ask for a school, but actually to build and run it by their own efforts. It is less important that a productive industry should exist than that the people should acquire the practical knowledge of how to cultivate their own lands efficiently and without ruining the soil. ... [O]ur primary task in Africa in relation to the people is to stimulate their initiative, to do what can be done by Government officers to encourage people to want change and to equip them with the power themselves to create change. (ACJ 9/6 ff.5-6)

The key to change, therefore, was the stimulation of initiative in African society itself. 'The dynamic should come from within' (ACJ 9/6, f.14). But, Creech Jones told Colonial Service officials, 'I am satisfied that progress has to be stimulated by you as well as initiated by the colonial peoples themselves, that you have often to supply the spark to kindle the flame.' (ACJ 9/6, f.7)

**Mass Education.** The first ingredient in 'supplying the spark' was 'mass education'. This emerged from the activities (in the 1920s and 1930s) of the Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies, and was by no means the invention of Creech Jones alone (Holford 1988). But he was a prime mover: as a member of the ACEC and in particular of its Adult and Mass Education sub-committee. The latter, appointed in 1941, issued a landmark report, *Mass Education in African Society* (Colonial Office 1943) two years later on 'the best approach to the problem of mass literacy and adult education' taking into account the ACEC's 'emphasis ... on community education' (p. 3).

The theoretical and practical importance of *Mass Education in African Society*, and its successor, *Education for Citizenship in Africa* (Colonial Office 1948), can hardly be overstated. Education was brought centre-stage, the fulcrum of development policy. Mass education was to be a 'popular movement' making 'a direct appeal to the great majority of adults and adolescents in a community, so that they and their families will really benefit from it'. The focus was on 'the whole community as a unit to be educated' (Colonial Office 1943: 13). Education would be achieved through 'mass education officers' co-ordinating 'campaigns' or 'projects'.

These officers would link local projects with the wider plans of the colony. There would be assessment of local need based on surveys; making contact with 'likely elements in the community' who would support the campaign; a "curriculum" planned in relation to the main obstacles to progress in the area' (p. 17).

Mass education, soon to evolve into 'community development', was also a clear precursor of more recent British community education (Holford 1988; Lee 1967). Creech Jones' role in shaping policy and practice has seldom been acknowledged. His papers demonstrate an enormous attention to detail, an unceasing interest in policy implementation and practice, as well as formulation. He was in constant correspondence with minor and major mass educators and administrators in the colonies. Two examples illustrate. Fred Clarke, a fellow-member of the ACEC Adult and Mass Education sub-committee, worked on a draft paper on Adult Education in 1942. Creech Jones regarded this as an important and 'able document' but 'not popularly written' (ACJ 2/1 f.87); he exchanged several letters with Clarke (ACJ 34/3 ff.58-60) in an attempt to encourage Clarke to write for the practitioner: 'Illustrations help the plodding reader a lot', he wrote. He also made important substantive contributions: it was 'desirable to make clearer that education was a problem which shoul[d] extend throughout life, that adult work was as necessary in some respects as other work—in some respects more so'. He defended mass education against strong opposition from the Colonial establishment: the Governor of Kenya, for instance, thought it 'wrapped' in 'a mist of unreality', ignoring 'the unhappy but at present undeniable facts of African dishonesty, unreliability, untruthfulness and sloth' (ACJ 34/1 f.32; cp FCB 68/2 item 11).

**Adult Education.** Mass education would provide the 'spark' for local initiative, the key to local development schemes, and a foundation for local democracy. But it was only part of the adult educational package. There was also to be 'adult education' itself, understood in a British sense: university extra-mural departments, voluntary associations (such as the People's Educational Associations in the Gold Coast and Sierra Leone, modelled on the WEA). This was a response to an acute perceived need: 'the drift apart between the Government officials and the African intelligentsia', as one correspondent wrote to Creech Jones (ACJ 34/1 f.13). If democratic self-government were to be achieved, it required not just institutions, but capable and committed political elites. The key factor was not so much whether 'a particular African territory should have a progressive constitution with full African participation' (though he worked for these too), but

that there should exist in the territory a considerable group of people capable of effective political action, by which, of course, is meant not merely criticism of the government, nor the capacity to make speeches, but the capacity to take part effectively in public life and to shape political development themselves (ACJ 9/6 f.5).

Creech Jones had a deep understanding of, and belief in, British adult education: similar work in the colonies would help develop 'tolerance, disinterestedness, objectivity, ... powers of judgement', a 'spirit of public service' (ACJ 9/6 f.10). But his approach (as always) was to build policy from detailed knowledge of practice. In November 1944, for instance, he argued that the ACEC should give attention to 'political education'. 'In the excellent work which was being undertaken by Mr Griffiths [in the Sudan], in the deliberations of some of the political and education officers in Nigeria and also in East Africa, there was an accumulation of very thoughtful and enlightened opinion on the problems that were



raised, not only in regard to mental enlightenment, but also in regard to building up a sense of responsibility' (CO 987/2).

**Educating the Colonial Service.** An important constraint on Creech Jones' policies was the Colonial Service: the civil servants who worked in the colonies, at all levels of government, both specialist and generalist. Only through these people could his policies be carried out; some were less than sympathetic. Here too education was the key: training courses were introduced at British universities; there was to be 'systematic training' for all colonial servants (ACJ 16/3 f.8); an annual residential conference was introduced (for colonial servants on home leave). He generally gave the keynote address at these conferences; they tackled what he saw as critical issues. The 1947 conference, for instance, discussed African Local Government; in 1948 it was Initiative in African Society (mass education was key to both). The conferences built informal networks and shared experiences and insights; reports, prepared by participants, were circulated around the colonies.

**Discussion.** This paper puts the case for Creech Jones as a major figure in the history of adult education. There is, of course, a case against. He was not the only advocate of mass education or adult education. Among civil servants, Andrew Cohen and Christopher Cox played major roles. Margaret Read, a social anthropologist, and Clarke at the University of London, were highly significant. The FCB was central, and it relied upon the work of Rita Hinden and Marjorie Nicholson. 'Community' was a focus in the perspectives of the ACEC from the 1920s (Holford 1988). And there were the adult and mass educators in Africa, from whose reports, letters and visits Creech Jones developed his policies, and learnt. But in every significant development, from the mid-1930s, we find Creech Jones' hand: in discussions on the ACEC, in the foundation and work of the FCB, in the preparation of *Mass Education in African Society*, and above all as Minister and Secretary of State at the Colonial Office between 1945 and 1950. Christopher Cox, the Colonial Office's Education Advisor, summed it up: 'As for education, ... we never have had & never shall have a Secretary of State who, to put it bluntly, can hold a candle to you' (ACJ 34/2 f.58).

None of this is to argue that Creech Jones never made mistakes. He was, in the scheme of things, one of the Labour government's lesser Secretaries of State. His educational and development policies were framed within the context of more pressing political agendas pressed by more powerful colleagues. He had his own prejudices. While understanding nationalism, he shared Bevin's violent antipathy to Communism: this led him, for instance, to oppose the extension of Oxford extra-mural work from West to East Africa (ACJ 34/3 ff.34-6; Fieldhouse 1985: 64-8). But he was never diverted from his fundamental commitment to the peoples of Africa, and to mass and adult education.

Other criticisms of Creech Jones are possible. Assaults came from the left (Dutt 1951: esp. 236-71; Howe 1994: 143-230), but these did not in general address his educational contribution. From the right, a case against community development began to be made from the late 1950s (Blaug 1964); the central thesis was that it did not develop 'initiative' or development as effectively as encouraging free enterprise. Arguably this placed political aims at a discount, and was hardly a fair evaluation of the strategy. In any case, by the 1960s community development had long lost Creech Jones' guiding hand. A most significant critique would be from former colonies: my *impression*, however, is that studies of adult and community education in African countries typically now commence with independence.

But for adult educators, the case for Creech Jones is surely strong. He remains the only British Secretary of State for whom adult education was—in various ways—central to policy. His policies affected large areas of the world: not only the British territories: UNESCO's concept of 'fundamental education' owed much to colonial mass education (Holford 1988; Kimble 1955). After leaving the Colonial Office, Creech Jones made a major contribution to thinking on British trade union education (Holford 1994: 144-50).

One question remains: given his importance, why has Creech Jones been so unjustly ignored? The answer, I suggest, lies in the difficulty which the post-colonial world has had in coming to terms with colonial experience. Creech Jones was a socialist, albeit a Fabian one; but for much of the Left, especially from the 1960s, any attempt to administer colonies seemed collaboration with imperialism, with racism, with the enemy. This attitude is particularly prevalent among adult educators. It is understandable. Yet it will not do: not, primarily, because of Creech Jones, but because to write colonial experience out of history is—for adult educators—to ignore vital elements in the formation of our practice and theory.

**Unpublished Sources:** Rhodes House, Oxford: Creech Jones papers ('ACJ'); Fabian Colonial Bureau papers ('FCB'); Margery Perham papers. Public Record Office, London: Colonial Office records ('CO'). Interview with Marjorie Nicholson ('MN').

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Annie Hollis, Adult Education, and The Development of Socialist  
Political Culture on the Prairies, 1917 to 1938

by Cathy Holtslander (University of Saskatchewan)

*The starting point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is "knowing thy-self" as a product of the historical process to date which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory.*

Antonio Gramsci,  
Selections from the Prison Notebooks

*Let us never descend to the smallness of belittling the work of those who have gone before; rather let us try to be more worthy of the heritage they have left us, and recognize that "others have labored, and we have entered into their labor".*

Annie L. Hollis  
The Western Producer July, 1926

**Introduction:** Annie Hollis was prominent in the agrarian left for almost two decades, yet her name has nearly escaped the historical inventory. She, along with hundreds of now relatively anonymous farm men and women, struggled against the particular forms of capitalism and patriarchy that dominated the people of Saskatchewan in the 1920s and 1930s. The institutions they developed in the course of their struggle still shape the political and social structure of Western Canada.

This study will look at one woman and her praxis as an adult educator. By examining how she integrated her philosophy into action, and her experience into theory, Annie Hollis can be seen as one of the organic intellectuals of the prairie farm movement, who educated -- and were educated -- through the organizations they founded to change their world.

This is not meant to be a biography of the "great (wo)man" genre, but an example of one person shaped by her own history, who in turn helped shape the course of history. By examining her life and the ways she worked, adult educators of today can take encouragement and inspiration. Particularly in Western Canada, Annie Hollis and her contemporaries are part of who we are, and of who we can be.

Annie Lavina Snaith was born in Northumberland, England in 1871. She grew up in a family where political issues of the left informed daily life. As a young woman she trained to be a teacher. She taught in France as well as in various places in England. While working, she studied to obtain a Licentiate of Arts from St. Andrew's University.

By 1909 she had become an activist in the radical Women's Social and Political Union. She was militant, and marched with the Pankhursts in various demonstrations. The fight for the women's vote was valuable political experience, to which she made reference in later correspondence regarding labour and farm issues in Canada.

In 1914, the Snaith family emigrated to a homestead in south western Saskatchewan. Annie began teaching at Anglo School in 1915, and soon was active in the Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association (SGGA). By 1916 she was married to a farmer, George Hollis, of Shaunavon. In 1917 she was elected as a district director of the SGGA. She held positions in the organization continuously until 1929.

Saskatchewan had become a province in 1905, less than ten years before Annie Hollis emigrated. It was being settled by people from many European countries, the United States, eastern Canada, and the British Isles. (Aboriginal people of the region were subject to treaties and living on reserves.) There were many cultures, but English was dominant.

The immigrant farmers had mostly been working class people or peasants. Many of the British and Scottish had experience in the trade union movement before coming to Canada. There was a feeling of possibility for people who wanted to create a new society in Western Canada, as well as for those who dreamed of prospering, free from the feudal constraints of Europe.

Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association: The SGGA was a major focus for Annie Hollis's adult education work. It was a grass roots organization, born in 1901 as a result of farmer's frustration with the control over the conditions of their lives wielded by the Canadian Pacific Railway and the large grain companies. By the time Annie Hollis arrived in Western Canada, the SGGA membership included almost a quarter of the 104 thousand farmers in the province, an important sector of Canada's agricultural economy. (Lipsett, 1968)

The SGGA can be seen as the "party" of the farmers, as defined by Gramsci when he says "in any given society nobody is disorganised and without party, provided that one take organisation and party in a broad and not a formal sense." (Prison Notebooks 264) and: "In the political party the elements of an economic social group get beyond that moment of their historical development and become agents of more general activities of a national and international character." (PN 16)

Farm women organized the Women's Section of the SGGA, known as the Women Grain Growers (WGG), around 1912 in response to their isolation on individual farms, and their need to organize in order to address their concerns. It was never a "Ladies Auxiliary" type of organization, but an economic organization which provided a forum for women to develop their own discourse and to agitate for legislative changes. Annie Hollis was an active member of the WGG and held executive positions from 1921 to 1926 when the UFC was formed.

The WGG was very important in developing leadership among farm women. It was a remarkable organization in that it managed to deal successfully with the difficulties of separate versus mixed sex organizations. In these years, the WGG laid the ground work for some of our most important social institutions, including socialized medicine, the Medicare system, established in Saskatchewan in 1944.

The SGGA itself changed over the years. In 1926 it amalgamated with the Farmers' Union of Canada to become the United Farmers of Canada. Annie Hollis was on the committee which established the structure of the new organization.

Issues of class and gender in the nascent organization became problematic. There was conflict with the old Farmers' Union men who wanted to limit membership of the new organization to "bona fide farmers", on the grounds that it was a class based organization and this was the way to secure the farmers'



interests. However, many women who were members of the SGGA lived in towns and villages, and shared more interests with farm women than with middle-class businessmen. In a letter to her friend and colleague, Violet McNaughton, she tells of her own inner debate. Finally she decided against supporting separate women's sections as "I'm convinced too that our best women are just as much alive to the national problems as are the men..." and because there already existed a separate farm women's organization, the Homemakers Clubs.

Mrs. Hollis subsequently became the new organization's first Woman President. Later the UFC became the National Farmers' Union which is recognized as the voice of radical farmers today.

**The Wheat Pool and the Western Producer:** The prairie economic system was drawn in fairly simple lines in the early 1920s. Land holdings were small, implements horse powered, labour intense, and relationships between farmers were fairly equal in an economic sense. Men and women were often overworked, and subject to sudden loss when hail, drought, or illness struck. The injurious effects of monopoly capital on their lives were particularly galling, as these were wilful, man-made problems. Unfair practices such as short weighting, low grading, preferential treatment of the large grain companies by the rail roads, and the reluctance of governments to enforce regulations on behalf of farmers, made it quite clear that the individual farmer was in a vulnerable position.

In 1922, Annie Hollis was active towards the establishment of the Wheat Pool, the farmers' co-operative grain marketing agency, and the weekly paper, The Progressive, later re-named The Western Producer. The two organizations went hand in hand. Farmers could challenge the private grain companies only if support for their efforts was broadly based and highly committed. One way to build and maintain this support was through a farmers' press. Thus Annie Hollis, Violet McNaughton, Alexander McPhail, George Edwards, and other reformers, known in the SGGA as the "Ginger Group", organized such a paper. (Taylor, 1991)

The Western Producer was a major force in advancing the discourse on agrarian socialism and the co-operative movement. Its pages were available to anyone who wished to write letters to the "Open Forum" where ideas were debated in earnest with considerable sophistication and insight.

**Electoral Politics:** Years of disappointment with the Liberals' and Progressives' failure to implement the farmers' radical economic agenda, convinced the farmers' organization to take a step towards electoral politics. Although the 1930 UFC Convention decided not to contest the election, it did endorse the formation of a separate party.

Annie Hollis was involved in starting the Saskatchewan Farmers Political Association. The new party anticipated the Great Depression of the 1930s and called for measures to prevent economic disaster and war.

Mrs. Hollis won the nomination for the federal constituency of Maple Creek. She was mandated to run on a platform which included: nationalizing the banks and railways, opposition to assisted or solicited immigration, nationalization of natural resources development, abolition of the Senate, publication of all parties' campaign fund sources, recall of Members of Parliament, active propaganda for Peace, and the abolition of war as an instrument of foreign policy.

The Farmers Party did not win the election but Annie Hollis gained a respectable proportion of the votes in her riding. She remained actively involved with the emerging party which by 1933 had become the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF). She decided not to run in the next election as "the Scandinavians here would not support a woman", and instead campaigned and spoke on behalf of the male nominee.

Gender politics was a consistent theme in Annie Hollis's life. She applied an economic class analysis to the particular case of farm women. Her speeches and columns emphasized women's work as productive work - contrary to the Dominion Census Bureau's definition. This reflected and developed the identity of women as producers of wealth, that women's unpaid labour was being exploited by the railways, grain companies and banks along side men's underpaid labour in the fields. She also asserted that women had both the right and the duty as citizens to be politically involved in deciding public issues.

She worked to develop leadership among prairie women, both by encouraging other women and by ensuring the organizational structure of the SGGA/UFC was conducive to women holding genuine leadership positions in the organization as a whole. She also used the Western Producer to advance her views regarding women and leadership. In 1925 and 1926 she wrote a column, "With Organized Women" from her position as Education Convenor of the Women Grain Growers. In it, she urged women to discuss issues of economics and political power in their local chapters, giving them specific suggestions and guidelines for small study groups.

Many of the issues Annie Hollis worked on rose from her own life as a farm woman and rural teacher. As a woman and a farm wife, she was well aware of the conditions women faced in everyday life, the economic issues that women had to confront, and the difficulties of carrying on political work in an almost exclusively male domain.

Socialism: As a socialist, Annie Hollis called for the replacement of competition by cooperation as the foundation of economic life. She did not support violence but regarded education as the basis of a socialist society and as the means for obtaining social change.

She did not declare herself a communist, but once responded to an "Open Forum" letter: "According to this definition, a communist is a true cooperator, a student of sociology, and must have altruistic instincts, 'some of us may be communists without realizing it.'" (Oct. 8, 1925) Her friend, former CCF candidate Rev. Armand Stade described her as a Fabian Socialist. In her 1928 Presidential Address to the convention of the United Farmers of Canada, Mrs. Hollis spoke at length on socialist political economy, including:

If present conditions are not satisfactory we must do our share in changing them. The only revolutions (or change) we have to fear is a revolution which is not according to knowledge but according to blindness and ignorance of passion. A revolution according to knowledge is only possible through a study of the past history of the human race in its struggle towards the light.

She was pessimistic about the role of the political party in the existing Parliamentary system. As a Farmers Political Association candidate she promoted the principles of referendum and recall. Her views on grassroots democracy seem to be closely tied to her passion for the solid political education of the people, as well as to the egalitarian principles of the Primitive Methodism of her childhood.

In a letter to the Western Producer she wrote: "For a long time it has appeared to me that the two most important problems before us are education and economic conditions. Which is the cart and which is the horse? I still incline to vote for education as the horse." (Oct 22, 1925)

**Education:** Annie Hollis taught in country schools in the Shaunavon area from 1915 to 1922. From at least 1920 on, she travelled in often very difficult conditions to speak for the farmers' organizations and later, their political parties. In 1925 she initiated the office of "education convenor" of the WGG and held that position for 2 years.

She viewed journalism as educational work. She worked closely with Violet McNaughton, editor of the women's page of the Western Producer, to initiate debate on topics of women's rights and roles. She wrote letters and articles in addition to her regular column, and contributed to other farm papers, national, and international magazines as well. She once referred to a hostile response to one of her letters to the "Open Forum", saying she was glad everyone did not agree with her, for it allowed her to push the argument.

The WGG started the Open Shelf Library whereby farm people could have access to books even in extreme geographic isolation. Annie Hollis encouraged women to use this library for advancing their own discussions in local study groups. The Open Shelf Library was the precursor to the well developed regional library system that Saskatchewan enjoys today.

**Conclusion:** Gramsci's concept of the "organic intellectual" articulates specific relationships of intellectual leadership, action, party, and praxis. Organic intellectuals educate within a collective framework by organizing an economic group into an instrumental party and clarifying its philosophy. The praxis of organizing is dialectic: the organizer/educator leads, and the new social structure thus created provides an arena for further practice and theory making.

The story of Annie Hollis as an organic intellectual, and the farmers' struggle she was a part of, is important to us today as we face another economic and political crisis. Looking back at our heritage, the difficulties overcome and the strategies used by our predecessors, we can take heart. We can also commit ourselves to uphold what they built -- Medicare, the Wheat Pool, the Canadian Wheat Board, broad access to education, and the ethics of co-operation and community. Annie Hollis's example shows that adult education, broadly defined as organizing and advancing the discourse of resistance, can have a role in shaping our collective future.

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## DO UNIVERSITIES SUPPORT MULTIPLE ROLE WOMEN STUDENTS ?

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**Abstract:** This paper presents findings of a study of adult women who carry both family and work roles while studying adult education and social work.

Adult educators have always advocated on behalf of learners who occupy concurrent roles in the family, the work world and the community. Increased access combined with changing demographic and economic trends have resulted in a marked increase in the number of adult learners in universities. These changes challenge universities to re-examine their commitment to and support for adult learners at a time when the adult student group is becoming more diversified. Increasing numbers of adult learners in universities come from "new" clientèles, such as women with family responsibilities (Apps, 1988, Edwards 1993). This raises the question as to whether traditional accommodations designed for working men meet the needs of specific groups. This paper presents results of a study of adult women who carry **both** family and paid work responsibilities while studying in two professional disciplines. This study focused on different actors' perspectives on needs of these students and on university-based supports.

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The multiple role experience includes students' actual role situation and their perception of that situation as being one of role strain. The latter is a felt difficulty in meeting role demands including role overload (time constraints) and conflict due to simultaneous conflicting demands (Coverman 1989). Role contagion can result when stress in one role affects performance in another (Hirsch & Rapkin, 1986).

Multiple role women are vulnerable to both overload and conflict due to time or resource constraints and difficulty balancing work, family and academic demands (Patchner, 1982). Parenting adds strain for women, who bear primary family responsibilities yet have trouble bargaining due to low power (Bentell & O'Hare 1987). In contrast, multiple role men suffer less from role strain, as they invest less time and energy in their family role (Googins & Bowden, 1987).

Adult students face various personal, situational and institutional obstacles as universities are not designed for them (Cross, 1981). Personal difficulties can include a negative self-image, unrealistic goals, difficulties with time management or study skills and problems integrating new knowledge (Apps, 1988). Adult women learners blame themselves and drop out more frequently than men for non-academic reasons (Merdinger, 1991). The most difficult situational obstacles for women include lack of time, financial resources and child care (Smith, 1991). Institutional obstacles related to inflexible scheduling, inconvenient locations or rigid pacing can impede progress (Blais et al, 1989, Long, 1983).

Students with support systems report less role conflict (Menks & Tupper 1987, Dyk 1987). Adult students see the university as less supportive than do

younger students (Kuh & Sturgis, 1980). Tangible university support ranges from removing constraints on adults' participation, through setting up separate but lower status programmes to integrating adaptations into regular offerings (Ackell & al., 1982). Examples include flexible schedules, adapted programmes, admission and administrative procedures as well as student services geared to adults' needs and timetables (Coats, 1989). Faculty helpfulness, expressed in a flexible, understanding response to students' needs, is a strong predictor of adult student satisfaction (Kirk & Dorfman, 1983). Respecting adults' experience, offering pragmatic content and ensuring student participation are helpful faculty behaviours, but it is not clear if professors alter their teaching style for older students (Gorham, 1985).

### **METHODOLOGY**

The data for this study were collected using forty semi-structured interviews and a short mail survey. The **qualitative study** used a purposive contrast sampling strategy, to ensure inclusion of a diversity of schools and respondents while allowing common patterns as well as key variations to be identified (Patton, 1990). The selection of four social work schools and three adult education departments allowed examination of the possible influence of andragogical principles. This sample was drawn from three Canadian regions and two language groups. The departments varied as to the extent adaptations for an adult clientèle were integrated into regular programmes (Ackell et al, 1982).

The twenty selected students varied in age, role combination, parent, student and employee status, ethnic background, type and intensity of role demands, ease in coping with multiple roles. However, all students shared being women aged 25 or over, who had spent at least two years outside an educational institution, had parenting responsibilities and were employed at least nine hours a week. Three students, two professors and the director were interviewed in each of the seven sampled programmes. Contrast sampling of faculty ensured inclusion of female and male professors with different ranks, ages and life situations, who had varying work responsibilities and teaching philosophies. Interview guides were developed for each type of actor, and pretested in both languages prior to use. Data analysis involved coding the transcribed interviews by theme, followed by descriptive classification, analysis and interpretation. Coding schemes were developed and refined using the intercoder comparison procedure suggested by Miles and Huberman (1984) to ensure adequate reliability. The Ethnograph qualitative analysis programme was used to sort data for subsequent display in summary tables.

Supplementary data were derived from a **short survey** mailed to directors of all accredited social work schools and all adult education departments in Canada. Twenty-eight directors, representing 84 % of the population, completed this questionnaire. This instrument collected broader data on programme and policy responses to changing student populations. Frequency and cross tabulation analyses were carried out.

### **SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS**

This section highlights key findings from both the interview and survey data. The survey findings suggest that average student age is rising and most students are carrying at least one other adult role. Eighty-five percent of the schools/departments surveyed offered part-time study and students moved back and forth between part and full-time status. In interviews, students made it clear that the "choice" of student status was made and changed in response to shifts in family or work demands. The one-third who were full-time students either had older children or were obliged to study full-time, to comply with programme or loan eligibility rules.

The fact that the student role was, of necessity, lowest priority was frustrating for all concerned. While faculty found these women "eager to learn" and "stimulating to teach," they lamented that multiple role women "operate on the squeaky wheel principle." Both faculty and students were aware that time constraints were intense, that studying often had to be squeezed into non-prime time and that family worries impeded concentration. Students were more bothered than faculty by role conflicts which occurred when crises erupted but negotiation was impossible, perhaps because students do not approach faculty until all other avenues have been exhausted. Role strain was greater for women employed full-time and for those caring for young or special needs children, supporting Froberg et al's (1986) finding that role conflict is likely when parenting demands are strong or inflexible and work commitment is high. Social work students reported more role strain than adult educators, perhaps because they faced more financial strain, their programmes were more rigid due to field work and they used less effective coping strategies (Home, 1992)

One professor pointed out that multiple role women are "determined to succeed despite the obstacles." All actors agreed that situational obstacles predominate. Financial problems are central, especially for single mothers who have to expend much energy "scraping money together" and for whom an unexpected expense can mean disaster. While part-time study can help, it is hard to maintain motivation. As one woman put it: "it was like leaving the dishes overnight, knowing you had to get up for them in the morning, except it was three years long." Both faculty and students pointed to family obstacles due to children and partners not adjusting to these women's reduced availability. As one professor put it: "the world assumes they have a licence to demand these women adjust their time to them." Lack of accessible, affordable child care accentuated these problems.

Personal obstacles, in the form of rusty study skills, low confidence and lack of assertiveness were mentioned by over a third the respondents, yet these busy women found it hard to fit in remedial workshops which were often scheduled at inconvenient times. Some faculty pointed to unrealistic expectations (Apps, 1988), such as not allocating enough time. As one professor put it: "A lot of people come in with the idea that this will work out just fine, they can just go to school and be with their family and work or whatever ..."

Institutional obstacles were brought on by the "lingering image of the ideal student as young, male and full-time" and reflected in a lack of "institutional support for multiple role students." There are rarely centres for mature students,

and student services such as libraries and counselling are not adapted either to these students' needs or to their timetables. Directors pointed out that financial assistance programmes are frequently inaccessible to part-time learners and degree completion times make few concessions to students with other responsibilities. Directors saw university norms and statutes as being designed for young students for whom the student role is central; non-traditional students are expected to find ways to conform.

Some universities more geared to these students were supportive of distance education or adapted scheduling. However, some adaptations designed for "traditional" adult clientèles don't work for mothers of younger children, who cannot attend classes in the evening or on weekends. Directors pointed out that adult women learners are such a diverse group that any single adaptation is unlikely to meet everyone's needs. For example, distance education reduces the risk of role conflict and appears easier, but successful students must be autonomous and able to cope with isolation. Many drop out because they "find it far more difficult than they ever imagined it would be."

When university-based support is offered, it is most often at the departmental level and informal in nature. Consistent with Kirk & Dorfman's (1983) findings, individual faculty were seen as the main source of university support. An understanding attitude, recognizing that these women were "juggling an awful lot" was essential. Women faculty who were themselves jugglers had an easier time empathizing and were "always in awe as to how much they're able to do" in spite of difficult learning situations. This positive attitude was sometimes reflected in a flexible response to concrete conflict or overload situations. Some faculty extended term paper deadlines, offered flexible assignment options and structured in peer helping or group project time within class hours. A small number went the extra distance by committing scarce personal work time and energy to extra tutorials, counselling, or advocacy for students in difficulty. As one professor put it: "We have fought a great many battles on behalf of individuals trying to get extensions on their theses, trying to get them reinstated after their time has elapsed, trying to get money for them." Some were involved in setting up or defending outreach and distance programmes regarded as luxury items by budget-conscious universities. Two "adapted" schools and all adult education departments went beyond informal encouragement from a few supportive professors. Students in these programmes felt their professors understood that "school isn't everyone's entire reason for existing."

Data from interviews with directors and from the national survey highlight differences between traditional and more adapted departments. The survey data revealed that some adaptations, (part-time study and evening classes) were offered by over 75 % of Canadian schools and departments and were usually integrated into regular offerings. Intensive courses were offered by 71 % of the sampled programmes. All of these options provide some flexibility while limiting cost and inconvenience for the university. More substantial adaptations (distance/satellite programmes and credit for prior learning) were offered by just over half the departments/schools, and only 61 % of were part of regular programmes. While most schools or departments had removed the full-time, regular schedule barrier



(Ackell et al, 1982), the more "costly" adaptations reflecting higher commitment were seen less often. Cross tabulation analysis revealed a significant relationship between certain adaptations and programme type. Adult education departments were more likely to offer distance education, intensive sessions and adapted admissions criteria than were schools of social work ( $p \leq .05$ ), perhaps reflecting some influence of andragogical principles.

While some directors simply recognized "we don't have a great deal to offer," others felt "we could be doing a lot better in making our programme a conducive place for working moms." However, it is clearly easier to "bow to the wind of university regulations than to the breeze of student demand." The directors interviewed for this study were keenly aware of both the need for change and the challenges facing them. Internal and external support played a key role in promoting and maintaining change. Internally, there can be faculty resistance, due less to rigidity than to the multi-faceted nature of the professional role coupled with the reward structure of most universities. Developing adapted programmes requires an intense time investment, but given universities' priority on research "there's no return on it as far as promotion and tenure are concerned - no one cares that you have done these things." The problem is especially thorny for female professors, who have been socialized to put caring first, yet must be productive researchers to survive in a still chilly university climate (Home, 1993). There may also be conflict between their strong desire to support these students and their inability to work flexible hours because of their own family commitments.

External support was key to the survival of alternative provisions. Material resources are a concrete expression of university commitment, especially for the more costly adaptations such as satellite centres. Absence of financial support can kill a programme, no matter how innovative it may be. Several schools of social work were forced to close outreach programmes, because university support was withdrawn in the face of initial high costs and low student enrollment. Some directors learned not to try such innovations without evidence of strong university commitment while others attempted to get around regulations rather than challenge them directly.

In conclusion, Canadian schools of social work and departments of adult education are becoming more aware of the needs of women who carry multiple roles. However, that sensitivity is not always expressed in responsive policies and practices. The result is that many multiple role students find "pockets of understanding" but little institutional commitment, while faculty feel "caught between really understanding and not being able to totally respond."

### NOTES

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## A New Model of SLA and Its Implications In Teaching ESL to Adult Learners

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### Abstract

This paper proposes a new information processing model of second language acquisition and discusses its andragogical implications.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the population of non-native speakers of English increased dramatically in the past decade (International Reading Association, 1993). To help adult non-native speakers to learn English as a second language is one of the important missions of adult education. To carry out this mission effectively, we need to have a sound theory to guide us. Though there are many existing second language acquisition (SLA) theories, such as Krashen's monitor model (1981, 1985), McLaughlin's information processing model (1983), Schumann's acculturation theory (1986, 1978), and Cummins' language proficiency models (1986, 1981), they fail to offer significant insight about adult ESL learning and instruction. Thus, we need a model which can shed light on both adult language learning processes and ESL instruction. The first part of this paper is to propose a new information processing model of adult SLA, which consists of three components: processing orientation hypothesis, external and internal conditions, and learning task analysis. The second part of this paper discusses its andragogical implications.

### Processing Orientation Hypothesis

The first component of the new model deals with the internal linguistic processing mechanism. I hypothesize that linguistic input is processed in two major ways, target language oriented and metalanguage orientated. By target language orientated, I refer to a heavy utilization of the target language in processing the input. In case of learning English as a second language, this means learning English through thinking and reasoning in English. By metalanguage language orientated, I mean the linguistic processing is accomplished by relying on a language other than the one being learned. One example will be learning English through processing the language in a language other than English. In most cases, the metalanguage orientation means the L1 orientation although they are not always identical. For convenience, hereafter I use "an L1 orientation" for "the metalanguage orientation," and "an L2 orientation" for "the target language orientation."

An L2 orientation aids in encoding the incoming information in L2, enables one to process the L2 input directly, thus facilitates the learning process and enhances attained proficiency, while an L1 orientation makes it hard to store information in L2, delays the process of having an L2 task performed when the task

requires the retrieval of stored information encoded in L1, thus slows down the learning process and hinders one from attaining a high level of L2 proficiency.

The processing orientation is not static. A learner may shift from one orientation to another. If we represent the processing of L2 with a continuum, then the so-called L1 and L2 orientations are actually two extremes of such a continuum. Theoretically, it is possible that each type of orientation may shift toward the other end along the continuum, but in most cases, the shift is from an L1 orientation to an L2 orientation. A gradual shift from an L1 orientation to an L2 orientation represents progress one has made in learning the second language. A complete shift to the L2 orientation means that the learner has achieved a higher level proficiency in the target language.

Though an L2 orientation is conducive to a high level of attained L2 proficiency, an L1 orientation is an inevitable stage in adult L2 learning. This is largely due to the disparity between L1 and L2 components in lexical structures.

A beginning adult ESL learner has developed an adequate linguistic system with well developed L1 lexical structures. Those structures contain a variety of information, including syntactic, semantic, phonological, graphic, and even concrete experiences or anecdotes related to the concepts designated by the lexicon. As the learner is making progress in learning a target language, those lexical structures are undergoing gradual changes. When a concept designated by a lexicon or phrase being learned in the target language already exists in the learner's L1 linguistic system, the learner does not need to learn all the information related to that lexicon or phrase, but only the information which is not available in the existing structure. In most cases, the new information is either the phonological or graphic information in the target language. This means that at the beginning stage, the contents of the lexical structures of the words or phrases are only partially related to the target language. In other words, though an L2 learner may have learned part of the L2 linguistic system, the representation of the learned L2 linguistic system is grounded in lexical structures with only small segments encoded in the target language. At this level of L2 proficiency, when attempting to communicate in L2, the learner has to activate relevant lexical structures. Because the contents of these structures are largely encoded in L1, the learner is willingly or unwillingly engaged in an L1 orientation.

As an learner makes progress in L2, he or she is gradually expanding his or her knowledge base of properties of the target language and acquiring new information about the lexicons he or she has already learned. The new information is integrated into the existing structures. This process continues. With new information constantly added, the lexical structures change, and the proportion of information in L2 in these structures expands. The expansion brings about an increase in the degree to which the learner uses L2 in making sense of the incoming data and performing social functions. When enough information in L2 is acquired for the lexicon, its lexical structure changes from a L1 dominated structure to a structure with two more or less equal components. When a large number of lexical structures develop to such a degree, the learner, instead of activating the L1



sections of the lexical structures to perform a task demanding the use of L2, activates the L2 sections directly. An L2 orientation is in operation.

Besides the growth and development of the L2 knowledge base, other factors also affect a learner's processing orientations. One of these factors is the linguistic complexity of the input. When the input is easy to process, an L2 orientation may take place. When the input is beyond the learner's L2 capability to handle, an L1 orientation is more likely to be employed. A second factor is the intricacy of the task the learner is engaged in. If the level of L2 proficiency demanded by a task is beyond the learner's capacity, this task may give rise to an L1 orientation. If the task is challenging yet within the learner's L2 capability, an L2 orientation is possible. A third factor is the learner's knowledge background. To construct meaning, one needs to activate background knowledge. The linguistic codes in which the background knowledge has been encoded determine the way the background knowledge is retrieved. If the background information is encoded in L1, the retrieval of that information tends to be L1 oriented. If the information is encoded in L2, the retrieval process may be L2 oriented.

### External and Internal Conditions

Language is human and social; its acquisition takes place in a social context and is affected by the context. In this context, social and cultural variables, economic and political factors, daily occurrences, and linguistic input are important external conditions to be taken into consideration.

Related to internal conditions are affective and cognitive factors. Affective variables include personality, self-esteem, personal attitudes toward both L1 and L2 cultures, perceived social distance between the L1 and L2 cultures, perceived economic status of L2, career orientation, and motivation to learn L2. Cognitive variables include cognitive strategies, learning style, intelligence, memory, and cognitive strategies.

Internal and external conditions act upon each other and shape each other: internal conditions are shaped by the environments the learner is in, and the perception of external conditions is affected by the internal conditions. The experiences one has gone through shapes one's view of the target language, its culture and its people and the native language, its culture and people. Positive attitudes toward both L1 and L2 cultures may lead a learner to develop high self-esteem and strong motivation to learn from the other group without feeling to have his or her self-identity threatened. However, negative attitudes toward one's own culture may give rise to low self-esteem, and negative attitudes toward the culture of the target language may prevent one from making real efforts to know that culture and to learn the language. The same can be said of the roles L1 and L2 play in a learners' life. Great economic and political values associated with knowing L2 may transform into a strong extrinsic motivation to learn the second language. However, if knowing the second language helps little enhance one's economic or political status, the learner may find no incentive to work hard at the language. Similarly, affective variables affect the way one interacts with his or her environment. Introversion and extroversion may determine the degree to which one

actively engages in social interactions, thereby affecting the amount of linguistic input one is exposed to and takes in. Low self-esteem may give one a sense of a pessimistic view of one's potentials and discourage one from trying to achieve one's goal, thereby hindering one from making efforts to learn L2.

### Learning Task Analysis

Gagne et al (1992) classifies learning into five types: intellectual skills, cognitive strategies, verbal information, motor skills, and attitudes. Learning a second language involves all those capabilities. It involves learning verbal information because it requires integration of existing knowledge and new information. It involves attitudes as they modify the learner's choice of action (Gagne, Briggs, & Wager, 1992). It involves discrimination, identification of object properties, defining concepts, and formation of higher-order rules. These are intellectual skills. Learning a second language is to learn to solve social interaction and meaning making problems. Problem solving requires learners to monitor and control "learning and memory processes" and to "select and regulate the employment of relevant intellectual skills and bring to bear task-oriented cognitive strategies" (Gagne, Briggs & Wager, 1992). In addition, several hundred muscles are used in the articulation of human speech (throat, larynx, mouth, lips, tongue and other muscles). To coordinate those muscles in producing new sounds, sounds which differ from those one is familiar with requires a tremendous degree of muscular control or the psychomotor coordination of the "speech muscles" (Brown 1994, 57). Muscular control is within the domain of learned motor skills.

As second language learning involves all five types of capabilities, the theories guiding ESL instruction should be theories dealing with the learning of all these capabilities. However, ESL instruction draws heavily on cognitive and humanistic theories, which are sound theories for intellectual, cognitive, and affective aspects of learning, but are not sound theories to guide the learning of motor skills. Gagne et al (1992) pointed out "the learning of motor skills is best accomplished by repeated practice." Repeated practice is theoretically grounded in behaviorism. Therefore, ESL instruction should broaden its theoretical foundation to include behaviorism.

### Andragogical Implications

The new model has a number of andragogical implications. First, the model suggests that a necessary condition for achieving a high level of proficiency in learning a second language is to shift from an L1 orientation to an L2 orientation. To facilitate the shift, instructors need to help students to enrich L2 linguistic information in lexical structures and expand their knowledge base about the target language. One way to do so is to provide extensive reading practices. Reading can keep the lexical structures activated, help L2 learners to glean both lexical semantic and syntactic information, and enrich the L2 component of lexical structures.

Second, to facilitate the shift from an L1 orientation to an L2 orientation, instructors should help remove factors which tend to trigger an L1 orientation. As has been mentioned elsewhere, one of such factors is the complexity of the input.

When the L2 input is beyond the learner's L2 capability, the learner may have to resort to an L1 orientation. Therefore, in instruction, ESL instructors need to simplify the complexity of both grammatical structures and lexical items and engage students in tasks which are challenging enough yet within the learner's L2 capability.

Third, instructors need to take into consideration their students' objectives and adjust their teaching methods. If the students are learning a second language for social interactions and survival purposes, instructors need to pay attention to develop their students' communicative ability. If their students are college bound, both BICS (basic interpersonal communicative skills) and CALP (cognitive academic/language proficiency) should be given attention to. As different teaching methods focus on different aspects of L2 learning, instructors need to use an eclectic method to help students to learn what they want to learn.

Fourth, SLA involves physical aspects of learning, and practice is a must to achieve accuracy and smoothness. So controlled practice and pattern drills should be included in ESL classrooms. By controlling the lexical items and sentence patterns, instructors release L2 learners from paying attention to both meaning and forms to giving more attention to the quality of pronunciation and intonation in speech production.

Fifth, controlled linguistic input reduces the authenticity of L2, especially the phonological aspect. When employing the pattern drills or audiolingual method in teaching, instructors should try to use normal speech if possible so that the learners are able to enrich their lexical structures with authentic phonological information and thereby acquire the authentic phonological system.

Six, affective and sociocultural variables affect second language acquisition. To facilitate learning processes, instructors need to pay attention to these variables and to make sure that optimal conditions are met.

Seventh, as the richness of the L2 contents in lexical structures plays an important role in facilitating the shift from an L1 orientation to an L2 orientation, instructional activities and curricula need to be designed to enrich the L2 contents of lexical structures. One way to do so is make available to ESL classes high-interest and low vocabulary reading materials, provide extensive reading practice, and get students exposed to as much comprehensible linguistic input as possible.

Eighth, language learning is a meaning making process. Comprehension involves predicting, hypothesizing, confirming and inferring. To enhance one's comprehension ability, one needs to learn to use various cognitive and metacognitive strategies. So in teaching, ESL instructors need to teach those strategies. Difficult materials are effective to be used for teaching cognitive and metacognitive strategies. But due to their high level of difficulty, difficult materials consume more cognitive efforts and decelerate reading speed. Low reading speed means a decrease in the quantity of linguistic input and intake. If reading materials are confined to difficult ones, such a curriculum hinders the development of lexical

structures and slows down the second language learning process. Thus, a more balanced curriculum is needed. That is, the curriculum needs to include both kinds of materials: easy ones and difficult ones. The easy materials are for extensive reading and for expanding one's implicit knowledge of the L2 linguistic system; the hard materials are for learning to use both cognitive and metacognitive strategies in meaning making processes and for learning explicit linguistic knowledge, including learning specific grammatical rules.

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## **Making A Way Out Of No Way: An Examination of the Educational Narratives of Reentry Black Women With Emphasis on Issues of Race, Gender, Class, and Color**

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the educational narratives of eight reentry Black women to determine the existence of common themes and to discover if there are parallels between the women's primary and secondary school stories and their reentry school stories.

### **Introduction**

Adult women who return to college comprise the fastest growing segment of the college population. Since the 1970s women have been returning to college in record numbers. Statistics show these women represent 41% of all female college students (Touchton & Davis, 1991). Black females comprise the largest number of reentry students of color at the graduate and undergraduate level. Yet, if conclusions are drawn from the literature on reentry students, it would be assumed that reentry students are a generic group of learners who are White females. Therefore, Black women as a group go unnoticed and unresearched, and their specific and individual needs remain unaddressed by academia.

According to Caffarella and Olson (1993), there is a flaw in the adult education literature in that most studies of reentry women have established the profile of a middle class White woman. Caffarella and Olson (1993) found this to be particularly inappropriate as educators have begun to make "generalizations" about reentry women based on homogeneous samples used in the available data. This study addressed the gap in the knowledge by presenting information on reentry Black women in comparison to the generic reentry women set forth by the literature.

The purpose of this study was to examine the educational narratives of reentry Black women involved in higher education. This research focused on determining common themes in the school stories of eight Black women and sought to determine if their reentry stories exhibited continuity or discontinuity with their prior educational experiences.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this study was twofold. First, the concept of Black feminist thought with its theories and extensive body of writings provided guidance and helped establish parameters for this research (Collins, 1989; Collins, 1990; Giddings, 1984; hooks, 1989). This perspective analyzes issues of race, gender, class, and color and sets forth that the daily living of Black women in the face of these forces has produced a collective consciousness that resists being defined as less than, resists being stereotyped as undesirable, and seeks to define and empower its members by interpreting existence as a triumph. Secondly, using this oppositional world view and its resulting epistemology (Collins, 1989) encourages the researcher to use experience as a criterion for assessing knowledge.

Therefore, the author's personal narrative and accompanying perspective were part of the study.

### **Methodology**

This was a qualitative study that used narrative analysis as the specific methodological instrument. The study examined the educational narratives of eight reentry Black women, including the author. An unstructured interview format, accompanied by an opening statement, and an interview guide were used in the study. The narratives were transcribed and the interviews were analyzed as text. Passages were dissected from the original transcript and given in support of the various emerging themes. In order to accomplish the problem set forth in this research a triple bookkeeping systems approach (Erikson, 1963) was utilized. A four-part system of field notes (Spradley, 1980) was used to enrich the data. Biographic techniques (Denzin, 1989) were used to interpret various phases of the narratives.

The sample consisted of eight women, including the author. The occurrence follows: two women in two-year community colleges, three in undergraduate schools, and three in graduate schools. The colleges designated for this sampling were: 1) a predominately Black women's college located in a large Southern metropolitan area; 2) a large Southern state university's main campus; 3) a predominately White women's college; 4) a small junior college located in a Southern metropolitan area; and 5) a religious affiliated university located in a small metropolitan area. The purposeful sample was obtained primarily by contacting college reentry programs and through means of snowball sampling.

### **Results**

An analysis of the data revealed that the issues of race, gender, class, and color were apparent either implicitly or explicitly in each of the educational narratives studied. These concerns were present in the early school stories of the women as well as in their reentry stories. Therefore, continuity was maintained between the two experiences. While the study's interview guidelines specifically disallowed mention of race, gender, class, and color, these issues were addressed by the respondents in constructing their narratives. As noted by Brody, Witherell, Donald, and Lundblad (1991), adults will explore themes of gender and culture if the interview format allows the interviewee control of the structure.

Racism was a detectable component of the stories of classroom interactions. Gender was more discernable in the respondents' social and family anecdotes. The concept of ethgender (Ransford & Miller, 1983), a view which holds that gender and race are inseparable for Black women, was apparent in the narratives of each woman. The stories that they related highlighted direct examples where being Black and female combined to make their lives different. In the following excerpt from which the title of the study was derived, one undergraduate woman communicated the uniqueness of her reentry process in relation to her race and gender. This participant has been in part-time pursuit of her degree since 1985. Sometimes she did not have the tuition money or transportation to and from college. Despite trying circumstances, outwardly she appears optimistic. She reveals how much she wants her degree and the importance she attaches to the diploma:

Ya'll make me sound like Rebecca of Sunny Brook Farm. You know I'm not. But I think there is humor in almost every situation. What

you have to remember before you start laughing or crying or ranting or raving, reacting to whatever is going on around you is, is it worth all that? And is it alright? Are you here? Cause my logic is, if I woke up I'm suppose to be here today. Which means whatever comes, I'm suppose to be able to handle in some type of way. If you don't bend with the situation that you find yourself in, you're gonna break. Cause who am I? I'm a Black woman in America and that's as handicapped as you can get. You know? And I can't remember what comedian said it, but it's the truth. And what this is --- is trying to make a way out of no way. That's it. I don't have a pot to piss in or a window to throw it out of but I want it. And this is how I have to go about getting. I need the piece of paper.

The remaining societal configurations seen as impacting upon the lives of the research respondents were class and color. Since a disproportionate number of Black women exist below and slightly above the poverty level, class is inextricably tied to the situations of reentry Black women. Six of the eight women in this research spent their childhoods in poverty and one half of the respondents presently live under difficult socio-economic conditions. As regards color, intra-racial discrimination among Blacks gives preferential treatment to those with lighter skin (Russell, Wilson, & Hall, 1992). Although the subjects did not advance color as having impacted on their reentry experiences, a majority of them set forth that it had negatively impacted their childhood school backgrounds to the extent that it influenced their present perceptions relative to self-worth. One third of the research subjects acknowledged that colorism continued to affect them outside the classroom.

During the reentry process the respondents continued to live in the face of racism, sexism, classism, and colorism both inside and outside the classroom. Figure one indicates with a systems design how the lives of the reentry women in this study are conceptualized in relation to society and these forces. The respondents in this study have developed various ways of coping that enabled them to survive and or succeed. In connection with these strategies three themes emerged, silence, negotiation, and resistance. These are depicted in the figure as the background of Black women's life experiences.

As explained there were times that the women were silent. Occasionally they silenced themselves in the classrooms, refusing to speak out when they had answers or when they felt their answers would be controversial. In the following example one of the graduate reentry women describes how she evoked silence in response to a racial dilemma:

And in Georgia History class there comes a time when we must deal with Civil Rights and prejudices and Black/White relationships and all of this ... I was the only Black in the class. Antiquated and Black in the class. Which meant that I have had the opportunity to not only read about the changes but I've lived the changes. There were times in the class when even the professor felt uncomfortable... There were lots of times that questions were asked that even I did not respond to at all because I did not want to respond honestly or from my true feelings. A lot of times, I just suppressed my own answers or my reactions... Well

to be honest after a while I felt that it was better for everybody concerned in as much as I was the only one.

At other times, the women said they silenced their thought processes when situations were painful and thinking about them would mean expending energy needed for survival.

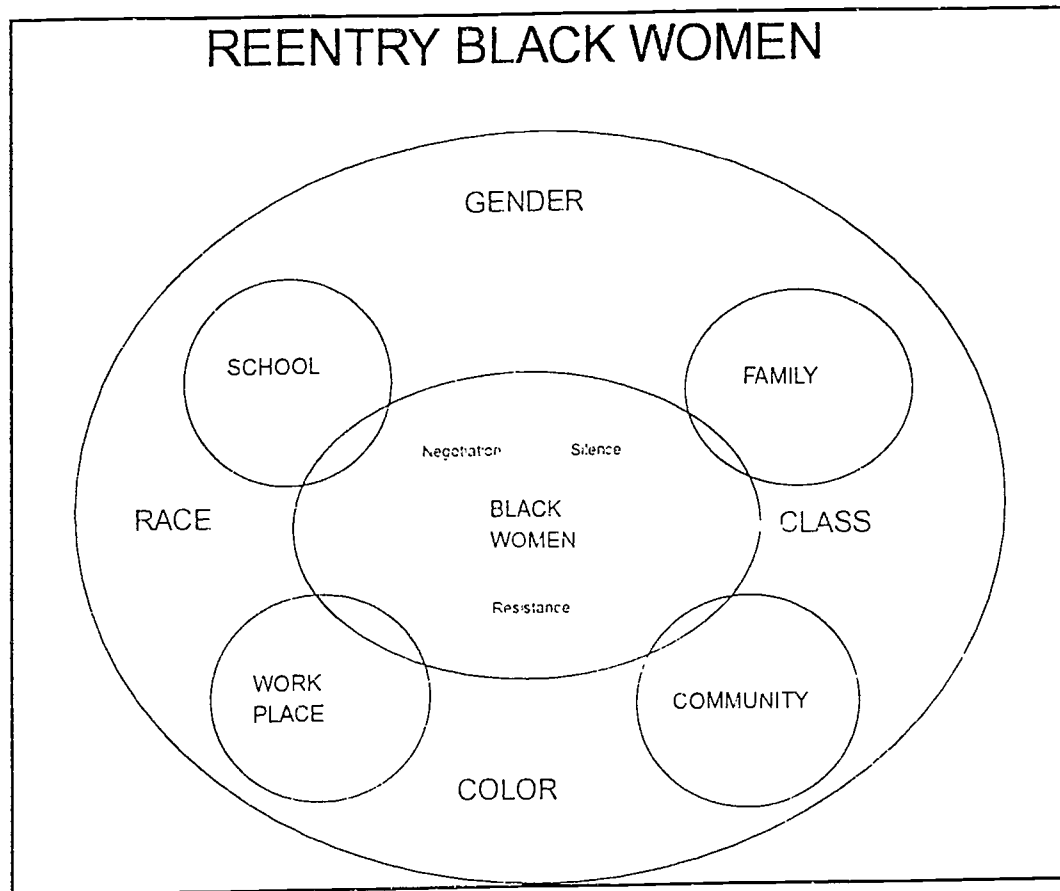


FIGURE 1: REENTRY BLACK WOMEN. This systems figure represents the inter-relatedness of Black women's lives and societal forces indicating the coping mechanisms used as arbitration.

The second strategy or theme evident in their responses was negotiation, a method the respondents used to balance competing concerns. They would negotiate internally, the cost of action or inaction, or they would negotiate externally by taking some action that demonstrated an arbitration. The theme of negotiation was often identified in direct relation to issues of gender in their personal relationships. Several of the women carried the bulk of the prescribed household duties while attending school. This seemed a negotiated bargain in exchange for the freedom to



attend school. This negotiation on the part of the respondents was also evident when the study habits adopted by the subjects were discussed. The data excerpted below explains how one of the reentry women, a full time employee and full time student, negotiated her study time around her relationship:

I would go to bed with my husband at 11 o'clock. And ah, I would set the alarm for 3:00 or 4:00 a.m. So I'd get up and do my studying then. That way I could still have our family time, so to speak, and have study time too.

The final and third theme that emerged from the text was resistance. The resistance engaged in by the subjects was externally manifested but was always preceded by inner turmoil and conflict in which consideration was given to the cost of open resistance. In the following example the participant discusses how she openly resisted her classmates' assessments and lack of interest concerning her race-centered research:

And, ah, there would be times when people would tell me that they didn't want to listen to what I had to say, particularly when we started our series. And we were all working on our dissertations at various stages. It just never stopped me. I've always believed in myself.

In contrast with the participation literature that suggests that life variables such as marriage, children, past successful school participation, and family background are strong indicators of future school enrollment, the lives of the women in this study revealed these factors were not relevant to their reentry. They had decided to enter higher education regardless of past school failures, lack of family support, marriage, and childcare concerns. Although the women in this study experienced some of the same situational and psychological barriers that have been described as endemic for reentry women, such as doubts about performance, scheduling conflicts, and lack of financial aid, they considered these extraneous to other barriers encountered. Therefore, their classification or acknowledgement of such issues as dilemmas, barriers, or traumas was dissimilar because their perceptions of these would be ranked differently in their hierarchy of concerns.

### **Discussion**

Many of the general assumptions about generic reentry women did not hold true for the reentry Black women in this study. It was revealed that Black women as a group have unique experiences that distinguish them from the larger groups in which they are associated, Blacks and women. Consequently, the research on women or Blacks does not necessarily encase research on Black women. It was also noted that there was continuity between the early educational experiences and the reentry experiences.

Black women in America live out daily existences in a world dominated by race and gender. In addition, many Black women are touched by class and color. When they enter the academy these forces do not disappear, but instead are already present and active. So for the reentry Black woman, the classroom becomes a microcosm of the larger society. Overall, the women in this study described a process of marginalization which occurred during their educational tenure. They accepted their place on the margin of this educational experience as inescapable

because of their conscious understanding that they were devalued by society. While suspicious of higher education and viewing it as having a hegemonic base, they still viewed educational attainment as a cultural prescription or directive for success. Although the women believed that they were not treated or graded fairly in higher education and accepted this as a foregone conclusion prior to entering college, they still held themselves accountable for any grading deficiencies or dilemmas that they experienced.

It was significant that the reentry women did not conceptualize their reentry as part of a resurgence or a phenomenon. Each saw herself as a solitary person whose unique life situation had forced her to take the delayed sojourn into academia. For the respondents, returning to school was an act of courage and sacrifice since primarily their backgrounds of segregated and unequal schooling had conditioned them to see higher education as possibly hostile and un-welcoming territory. These reentry women were not bolstered by financial aid, familial support, community networks, or cohort or classroom camaraderie. Each of the women persisted in making a way when no way seemed apparent. Too often the choices were made from a menu of few or no choices. All of this to face a goal that if attained will not guarantee a better future, for there are always the constraints of racism, sexism, classism, and colorism to be factored into the equation. So each reentry Black woman in this study returned to school and each in her own way made a way out of no way, each with the understanding that they were engaged in a game where the rules, stakes, and conditions were relative to their unique position as Black women in a society that values neither their race nor gender.

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## COLLEGIATE INVOLVEMENT FROM AN ADULT UNDERGRADUATE PERSPECTIVE

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**Abstract.** This current qualitative study of adult undergraduate students challenges past assumptions of effective undergraduate involvement based in substantive time commitments and collegiate role involvements. Five categories of adult student beliefs of involvement are suggested. A conceptual perspective of "adult undergraduate involvement" as situated learning through communities of practice is explored.

### **Background**

Past research and theory on the effectiveness of undergraduate education has been grounded in assumptions of campus-center student involvement as measured by time commitments, roles, and relationships to co-curricular and extra-curricular activities (Astin, 1985; Boyer, 1987). In essence, the more one engages in campus-related relationships, activities, and organizations as a central core of one's current life, the greater the favorable impact of undergraduate experience. Adult students typically represent a disjuncture with these theories and beliefs; their actions, involvements, and relationships are based predominantly outside of the college community. Some previous authors have suggested that this minimal involvement creates inferior and marginalized undergraduate learning. However, past research has not explored the student's own lived experiences, beliefs and actions in the undergraduate experience. How do adults view their involvement? Given the lack of significant investment of time, resources, and role involvement in collegiate life, what do adult undergraduates perceive as a quality undergraduate experience?

A naturalistic inquiry was conducted to explore how adult students characterize their sense of involvement in the collegiate experience. From their voices of lived experiences, beliefs, and actions, it was hoped to induce a new perspective of the realities of adult undergraduates' concepts and actions of involvement. This study elicited adult undergraduates' sense of meaning and actions concerning the collegiate experience. It gathered adult students' images and beliefs about the nature of their collegiate student role, of their relationship to the collegiate institution and of their actions of involvement in the undergraduate experience. This study assumed that there were multiple realities of the adult learner and of institutional environments which serve adult undergraduates. These realities were constructed in an interactive and dynamic fashion.

The qualitative research project was based in interviews of 90 adult undergraduates enrolled in one of six collegiate institutions [two community colleges, two public universities, and two adult degree programs in private liberal arts colleges]. Audio-taped interviews based in a semi-structured protocol were transcribed and inductively analyzed; key categories and themes were induced within each site, cross-comparisons were then conducted by setting of two like

institutions, and lastly across all settings.[For details refer to Kasworm & Blowers, 1994].

### **Key Findings**

What was the nature of involvement for these adult undergraduates? Across the six institutional sites, five major categories influencing adult student involvement emerged:

- 1) involvement influenced by the adult value selection of institution and academic program;**
- 2) involvement as an expression for a quality college education;**
- 3) involvement focused on academic learning through the classroom;**
- 4) involvement based in the adult learner support environment; and**
- 5) involvement based on financial access.**

These categories and themes reflected the social reality and subsequent judgements and actions of involvement by each of the adult student groupings.

Past research on adult student performance and satisfaction (Kasworm & Pike, 1994) had challenged past assumptions of the theory of involvement by Astin (1985) and Boyer (1987). There has also been observational reports that adult undergraduates have tended to focus upon the academic learning experience as the basis for quality education and undergraduate involvement. This current study suggested that adult students have highly complex beliefs and actions related to quality undergraduate education. In these categories of adult involvement, it was evident that adults made decisions and interacted with learning in a contextual and dynamic fashion. Commitments of time [as in full-time residency and extra-curricular activities] were not the measurement of importance and substance for adult undergraduates. Rather, these adult students viewed the nature of their commitments in a situated fashion and in relation to the acts of learning in classroom-related concerns, not collegiate community focus. Commitment of roles [as in leadership or membership in organizations, as well as involvements in collegiate activities] was not an important indicator for adult undergraduates of their investment in learning. Rather, for adult undergraduates, there was evidence of significant time commitments to studying, to making meaning of learning, and to relating their world of work, family and community to the classroom learning experiences.

There were differing themes by adults in each of the three collegiate contexts of community college, public university, and adult degree program in a liberal arts college. Within each of the settings, there were complex differences due to either past collegiate experiences, beliefs of self, beliefs of quality education, or significant forces of life roles at work, with family, or in relation to collegiate attendance.

### **Implications**

This research suggests an alternative conceptual perspective for adult student's involvement in undergraduate education and potential key elements which influence effectiveness or impact of undergraduate education. Understanding the adult learner in undergraduate education can be illuminated through the theory



**Table 1 Adult Student Categories and Themes of Involvement**

<b>Key Categories of Involvement</b>	<b>Community College Themes of Involvement</b>	<b>Public University Themes of Involvement</b>	<b>Adult Degree Program in a Private Liberal Arts College Themes of Involvement</b>
<b>Value Selection of program and institution</b>	<b>Academic Opportunity to succeed</b>	<b>Importance and Complexity of a University</b>	<b>Customized Adult Academic Program</b>
<b>Desiring a quality college education</b>	<b>Current personal support and success &amp; Future success in 4-year college</b>	<b>Quality linked to prestige and academic demands</b>	<b>Reputation of college &amp; Support of adult academic requirements</b>
<b>Quality of class academic learning</b>	<b>Learning focused on becoming competent in academic knowledge</b>	<b>Learning focused on expertise sharing and meaning development</b>	<b>Learning focused upon adult learners and their world</b>
<b>Adult Learner Support Environ-ment</b>	<b>Particular attention and support for adults</b>	<b>Adapting to fit into the university in relation to adult learner contexts</b>	<b>Programs designed for adult life support environments</b>
<b>Key Financial Access Concern</b>	<b>Financial Access and High Personal Costs</b>	<b>Financial Access and High Personal Costs</b>	<b>Financial Access for others and Personal Financial costs</b>

of Situated Learning (Brown, Collins, Duguid, 1989; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Situated learning occurs within a co-participation framework through authentic activities in real-world settings. Drawing upon these categories and themes, the theory of Situated Learning offers a valuable inferential framework supportive of adult undergraduate beliefs, actions, and roles. This adult world of undergraduate learning involvement is not a simple cause and effect relationship with one environment; it is not a matter of unitary involvement or non-involvement. Rather, adult undergraduate learning involvement is interwoven and situated within many environments and within past education, current undergraduate student actions, and related adult roles of family, work, and community.

Unlike the assumptions of an "expert environment of college/faculty/staff and of the need to socialized and enculturate the naive and uneducated", the theory of situated learning suggests that adult students are both novices and experts as they engage in legitimate peripheral participation in multiple communities of practice. Thus, undergraduate learning is both within the collegiate learning experience of the "designed classroom or lesson," as well as within the adult learner's mind and actions in multiple settings beyond the campus. For adult students, they may well be experts of concepts of management in one community of practice [work environment with practical knowledge] while also being a "semi-novice" in the classroom setting of management knowledge with academic concepts and terminology. Faculty can be viewed as both experts and as co-learners with adults in the classroom setting.

Key beliefs of meaningful access and involvement for adult undergraduates focus upon the classroom experience, upon personal connectedness with the faculty, and upon the adult's academic learning journey in relation to the other aspects of their adult life. Adult undergraduate students situate their judgements and beliefs in valued interconnections with their life biography, their world of work and family, their links to the broader world, and their specific situation-relatedness with the collegiate institution. Adult student involvement is based upon their socially constructed beliefs about the nature of quality academic experiences and actions to procure and validate those experiences. Lastly, adult student involvement is based upon the lived experiences of adult life. To be a student, to be a learner--one does not abandon the world. Rather, adult students embrace the world and its unique parts. Their undergraduate learning transcends the collegiate community geography.

Unlike previous literature, most adult students were not concerned or involved with the young adult macrocosm of forming their identity or social development embedded within collegiate functions. Few noted needs for acceptance and participation in a social clique, leadership development through a student group, or desire for full immersion in a full-time student life of extra-curricular involvements. For these adults, involvement was not immersion and grounding in movement from one key learning environment to another--movement from full-time high school to full-time undergraduate work. Involvement was not grounded in movement from the family environment of identity to the college community identity. Involvement was not grounded solely within the academic classroom. For most adults, their maturity, their responsibilities to family, work, and self created a different milieu; and their set of values and needs created the context for their zone of proximal development. The development was both cognitive and self evolving. In particular, adult students often believed that their sense of self and social

perspective was re-examined and potentially transformed through acts of learning initiated within the collegiate curricular environment. Yet the situatedness of the collegiate environment provided a background; the adult, their lived world, and the learning experiences created the dynamics for thought, reflection and action.

Adult undergraduate beliefs and action in undergraduate education were intertwined with communities of practice and socio-cultural development. Involvement was figurally based within the learning experiences of the classroom (one community of practice) with current work and/or knowledge background (other communities of practices). The journey of undergraduate study was focused upon the quality academic experience, yet the definition of quality varied by past, present, and perceived future communities of practice (both academic and life). For most of these adults, involvement was directly correlated to the supportive ease of access and instructional involvement in their situated communities of practice. Thus, these communities of practice were not only signposts, catalysts, and guides---these communities were instrumental in supporting or conflicting with adult student's beliefs and resources to engage in college studies.

Involvement for these adults was concerned with becoming knowers of collegiate academic knowledge in relation to their past knowledge, their current student role competency, and their related competency as worker, family member, and community/societal citizen. Most of these adults identified a unique context of academic knowledge within this undergraduate experience. They spoke to two ways of learning--that of personal knowledge and that of academic knowledge. They also suggested that there were no simply instructional principles for all adult learners in the undergraduate classroom, nor were there particular sets of expectations that all adults brought to the collegiate setting. Involvement for most adults was a continuous negotiation process, at the cognitive and affective level of knowledge and understanding.

Situated learning opens up the notion of "context" beyond the college campus. It suggests that undergraduate learning can occur in a variety of contexts-- in authentic contexts of actions, understanding and practice. It suggests that development is not hierarchical from less knowledgeable to more knowledgeable. Rather, development of knowledge for adult student is very dynamic, synergistic, and based in both being an expert and being a novice. Paramount to the theory of situated learning is the here and now of each individual adult learner as they co-create the world and knowledge.

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## Power and Planning in Environmental Education

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### Abstract

This case study explored government-initiated community-based planning involving issues of motivation and power within the context of a southern city.

### Introduction

Responsible planning includes the negotiation of power and interests within social and political settings (Cervero and Wilson 1994). Because of this, the responsible planner must be aware of the power relations and interests guiding the planning activity. This can be especially troublesome in planning initiated by the government with expressed purpose of community participation. In such initiatives, power is typically unequally distributed among the participants, with the community the weaker partner (McArthur 1993). In many cases, moreover, government planners may use their stronger position to advocate action they say represents the best interests of the community, even when there is evidence to the contrary. Thus, government-initiated community-based projects become an issue of unequal power and influence, with government interests often overriding community concerns and needs.

Our interest in this topic comes from our experience with planning what purports to be a community-based environmental education project initiated by a federal agency. A large part of this project's notoriety within the federal agency is due to its reputation as having a community focus. We have found, however, that issues of turf, power, and control often work against the project's community-based objectives, and in most cases contribute to endangering the program's successful development and operation. Issues of power and control are difficult to overtly address in most situations, therefore we designed a study that would help us reflect on the nature of power relations in government-initiated community-based planning. Further, we wanted to explore the degree to which this apparent oxymoron is indeed a conflict in participants' goals and objectives.

Our theoretical perspective in designing this study was critical theory. In particular, the analysis is framed in the work of Cervero and Wilson (1994), who discussed the impact of power and negotiated interests in adult education planning. In addition, we were influenced by the work of Wals (1994), who argued for localized, participatory planning of environmental education programs, especially in urban communities. Wals found that urban minority children's view of nature was dramatically different from those of suburban White children. He concluded that current environmental education programs, which are planned by environmental education professionals (most of whom are White and middle class), cannot meet the broadly stated environmental education objective of fostering critical thinking skills

regarding the environment in urban, minority settings. This then, is a central concern of the environmental project: to develop a project and program that is relevant to the users, and meets the criteria for fostering critical thinking skills in environmental education.

## Design

This study reports the first phase of a case study of planning for an environmental education project in a southern city. This phase included an analysis of the context within which the planning is embedded: Who was invited to join the planning committee? What are the motives for participation? What is the structure of the power relationships within the planning committee? Participant observation and document analysis were used to situate the planning activity within its context. A second component of the first phase included interviews, using the interview guide approach (Patton 1990). Prior to interviewing, each participant was given a disposable camera to take photographs representing their vision for the environmental project. This was done to encourage reflection about what is important in such a program, from the viewpoint of the participant (Freire 1994, Mezirow 1991). The photographs provided the starting point for the interviews. The interviews were designed to elicit information about each participant's vision for the environmental education project. Key questions included what form should the project take, who should be served, what roles should the participants play, and how should planning for the project be conducted.

The first interviews involved the government representatives on the planning committee. Subsequent phases will include interviews of local community residents and professional workers based in the community, as well as participatory group analysis/discussions with the participants. We expect the group analysis/discussion to enrich our understanding of the context, relations of power and influence, and how community planning in environmental issues is viewed by the different members of the planning group. These will be reported in the presentation, but are not complete as the paper is being written.

## The "Communities" and the Planning Group

The city in which these groups function is a medium sized southern city with a covert history of racial tension. The city is viewed by some as being behind the times socially. For example, one participant said, "We slept through the sixties and seventies, but we're awake now and ready for the eighties!" Exemplifying the largely covert racial tension mentioned by some participants, the state's land grant university is located on one side of the central business district, and the state's 1890 university (the Black land grant university) is located within fifteen miles, creating competition between many of the programs in the two universities. Maynard University, the Black institution, has received substantial federal financial aid in the form of agricultural grants, and has become largely dependent on the federal government for many of its programs. Typically at a disadvantage viz a viz the state land grant university, Maynard is looking for ways to promote its image. The environmental project is viewed as one way to achieve this objective. For example, one university representative, when describing Maynard's role in the environmental

project said that "in order for it [the environmental project] to meet the true goals and missions of our agriculture program it has to have a broad (geographic and programmatic) range of acceptance and usability." He mentioned the use of the state tourist bureau and Public Broadcasting Networks as means for publicizing the project. Thus, the dean and faculty of the college of agriculture, are represented in the group studied. Also in this group are local and state agricultural professionals, whose work involves promoting environmental and agricultural concerns both locally and statewide. Both the university and the professionals represent the government's interests. A second group, which will be studied later, includes a number of volunteer, professional, and resident community workers, including a state-wide organization president who has a stake in both the government's and the community's interests. She stated, "I don't see this as a Maynard thing as much as I see it as a community thing of which Maynard can play an enormous role."

The current planning committee consists of members of both groups. By adopting the conceptual framework regarding authority and the nature of society developed by Havassy and Yanay (1990), the government group may be characterized as representing a centralized form of authority, and the community group by representing a decentralized form. According to Havassy and Yanay, these forms of authority work within a continuum between a homogeneous to a pluralistic concept of society. A mismatch occurs when a centralized authority tries to operate within a pluralistic society, or when a decentralized authority tries to operate within a homogeneous society. The first phase of this analysis will examine how the government members of the planning group are operating within the conceptual framework laid out above.

The planning group has met four times in the past six months to begin forming the environmental education project. Each of the planning group members is taking the project seriously, and each sees it as meeting a number of objectives for the overall community, as well as for their organization.

### The Context

We became involved in this planning effort through the "recommendation" of the administrator of the federal branch with which one of the researchers is affiliated. The administrator felt the planning and implementation of the environmental education program would provide a number of benefits to Maynard. Specifically, Maynard's agricultural program will soon need to become less dependent on federal dollars, and consequently will need to improve the operational and management skills that will enable them to establish partnerships, raise funds, and operate on a more self-sustaining basis. The environmental project, because it typically involves a strong corporate and community component, theoretically could provide an organizational learning experience for Maynard, as well as meet a number of other university objectives. The environmental project was introduced to a variety of university personnel and the professionals by one of the researchers during a strategic planning meeting for the college. The project was presented as a community-based program through the description of the model program, which has been operational for three years. Subsequent meetings and discussions over the past six months have exposed a wide variety of interpretations and visions of what form the project should take. Prior to the intervention of one of the planning committee

members, only government representatives were present at the planning meetings. The last two meetings have included community representatives.

According to Havassy and Yanay's conceptual framework, conflict should occur if a mismatch develops between the form of authority operating and the context within which it is functioning. Further, McArthur (1993) suggests that in situations where government and community interests are represented, government interests will prevail. McArthur suggests that the motives behind the government initiative must be revealed in order to successfully plan, and that the first task of planning is to define and understand the community upon which the initiative is to be based. Therefore, using participant observation, interviews, and document analysis, we examined the motivations behind the participation of the government representatives, as well as their definitions of the community within which the environmental project would be developed.

### **Program Vision and Power in Planning**

The government representatives were far from homogeneous in their vision for the environmental project. However, most saw the project as serving the local community, and developed in or near a residential area within walking distance for the children to participate in the programs. Most also saw the program as serving an underdeveloped minority community: "...low income but not too far gone, it has to have a sense of community, for safety, accessible, protected, respected." The themes of safety and accessibility appeared repeatedly. For most of the government representatives, the variation in community concept was slight, centering most on whether the project would serve a small immediate community, or extend out to a larger area that could include the whole city. Two general motivations for this concept were revealed. Such a project would be good public relations tool, and a local concept would ensure use. The university representatives tended to place more value on public relations, while the other professionals emphasized the need to insure project usage. Said one professional: "What matters to me is that it succeeds and be used, and...be a learning tool for everyone." One university representative differed from the local use concept, espousing a project of statewide proportions. "...to me we are not building a city environmental project, but a state environmental project that is located near the city, and we will hope to draw from the populace of the entire state." In his view, the project would be centrally operated for a statewide audience, which may include local community participants. The motive for this concept, like some of the other university representatives, was public relations, a way of widely publicizing the university's involvement in environmental activities. This viewpoint is important because it was expressed by the most powerful member of the planning committee. His incongruent vision and powerful position was sensed, and indirectly acknowledged, by almost all of the participants. Said one of the University representatives: "The Maynard people want to see it as a Maynard program, and most people want to see it as a community program."

Thus, as the planning unfolds, the centralized authority (in this case the university) exercises greater power than the more decentralized government representatives, who are from different agencies and levels (McArthur 1993). According to Havassy and Yanay (1990), this situation has the potential to present a



mismatch between authority and society. The "statewide voice" is attempting to minimize the mismatch by defining society as homogeneous, that is, statewide, and authority as centralized (the university). Other voices are attempting to likewise minimize the mismatch by defining society as pluralistic (including a number of constituents) and authority as decentralized (community-based).

Therefore, the planning process, even before considering the voices from the community, appears to be at an impasse. The majority of the voices, speaking for the community concept, are challenged by one voice advocating a statewide project. Will this individual, as the most powerful member of the planning committee, hold out for his position? If he does so and is not challenged by the other committee members, the planning process will be anything but democratic.

## Discussion

Cervero and Wilson (1994) advocate for a more democratic planning process. The federal agency who originally initiated this project, and who is represented by one of the researchers, has attempted to "level the playing field" by using auto-photography (Ziller 1981), interviews, and group analysis/discussion to facilitate the emergence of all voices at the planning table. In the remaining phases, this study will describe the viewpoints of government and community players, examine the power relations between them, and explore whether those power relations can be addressed through a more democratic planning process.

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# **A SOCIAL DEFINITIONAL APPROACH TO THE CRISIS OF LITERACY: CONTESTORY DEFINITIONS OF LITERACY AS SKILLS, INFORMATION, AND CRITIQUE**

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**Abstract.** The social definitional approach is discussed and then applied to the social problem of illiteracy.

## **Introduction**

Within the last 20 years there has emerged a "literacy crisis" which reflects a broader crisis in education. During the 1970s the concern with the problem of illiteracy resulted in the 1979 publication of Adult Illiteracy in the United States by Hunter and Harman. The emergence of the crisis was given further support in 1983 with the publication of A Nation at Risk and subsequent studies which indicate that United States (U.S.) students are not as competitive as students from other countries in such areas as math and science. Fingeret (1984) points out that "In 1983 the President of the United States created an Initiative on Adult Literacy that resulted in the National Adult Literacy Project;..." (p. 1). She (1984) further notes that "in 1984 leaders of the business community created the Business Council for Effective Literacy" (p. 1). In September 1983, on Literacy Day, "President Reagan announced that the Department of Education was launching a national literacy initiative to increase public awareness of the problem to enhance existing services" (Hunter & Harmon 1985, p. ix). In 1985 Kozol's Illiterate America declares that one third of all adult Americans are illiterate. In 1989, Chisman's Jump Start, written for the Bush Administration, speaks of dire consequences for the United States (U.S.) if the problem of literacy is not solved, particularly workplace literacy. Barbara Bush makes literacy one of her main concerns and she, along with others such as Shirley Miller the wife of the Governor of Georgia, links the problems of illiteracy to other social problems. At a higher level of literacy competence, the crisis of literacy is given additional support by two books dealing with the decline of cultural literacy. The first book is Cultural Illiteracy by E. D. Hirsch, Jr. (1987) who argues that our schools--primary and secondary--have failed to teach students basic cultural facts. The second book is The Closing of The American Mind by Bloom (1987) who argues that higher education has moved away from teaching a core curriculum based on the great books of the Western Tradition. Both books received widespread publicity and generated public debate which is still on going in academic and popular circles under the guise of "political correctness" or the debate on multiculturalism.

However, both Quigley (1990), and Graff (1991) note that the "literacy crisis" is nothing new. Quigley (1990) points out that "Literacy policies have long been used to 'solve' social problems ranging from unchristian conduct to unemployment" (p. 160). One significant question which emerges from this literacy crisis is how can we to make sense of it. Literacy educators may find it helpful to have in their toolbox a sociological approach for understanding the social problem of illiteracy. The social definitional approach is a useful way for understanding this problem. In this paper I first describe the social definitional approach, and, second, I apply it to the social problem of illiteracy. From a selective review of the literature on literacy, three major contestory ways of defining literacy as a social problem can be found. They are literacy as skills, literacy as information, and literacy as critique.

### **The Social Definitional Approach**

The social definitional approach holds that it is not the objective or structural conditions which are important, rather what is significant is how various social actors define the objective conditions and then take some kind of social/political action based on their subjective evaluation of them (Gusfield 1980, 1989; Schur 1980; Spector & Kitsuse 1977). Schur (1980) points out that "it is what people make of a condition they deem problematic ... and what they do about it that counts most socially" (p. 132).

Gusfield (1980) points out that social policy issues involve "Conflict and controversy in the arenas of public action" (p. 5). Others authors note that because there seems to be no consensus about the definition of the literacy problem there occurs competition over and conflict among the various cultural meanings attached to this problem (Schur 1980; Spector & Kitsuse 1977). Once the defined problem is brought into the public sphere, it becomes a political question, if it were not previously. This means that the struggles over and about the problem of illiteracy are also struggles over and about power, the power to own the definition of literacy, to impose that definition on others, and to offer causes and solutions.

In the struggle over the cultural meanings of social problems, social actors engage in claim-making activities. Spector and Kitsuse (1977) define claim-making activities as "a demand made by one party to another that something be done about some putative condition. A claim implies that the claimant has right at least to be heard, if not to receive satisfaction" (p. 78). If social actors are successful in their claim-making activities by having their particular definition of the problem become part of social policy, then their claims can be imposed on others.

One final element of the social definitional approach is what Gusfield (1980) calls the structure of public issues. The structure of public issues consists of ownership and responsibility. In the struggle over and for cultural meanings of social problems, actors attempt to claim ownership. Gusfield (1980) defines ownership "as the ability to create and influence the public definition of a problem" (p. 13). Ownership allows social actors "to define and describe the problem" (Gusfield 1980, p. 13). Owners then become the dominant voices concerning the problem and their voices are more likely to be listened to by policy makers and the public. Gusfield (1989) states "In the process of presenting themselves the speakers do more than state a personal opinion. They make a claim to represent more than themselves, to speak for the interests of the public and the interests of those they are acting toward" (p. 435). This is to say, there is an attempt to turn particular interests into general interests. The definers attempt to present their position as one of consensus and the problem as one of deviation from the norm (Gusfield, 1989). They seek to make it part of the dominant selective tradition (Williams, 1977) and engage in what Schur (1980) calls retrogressive interpretation which refers to the process of reconstructing the past based on and in light of the new definition.

The second element of the structure of public issues is responsibility which, in turn, consists of two parts: causal and political responsibilities. Causal responsibility "is a matter of belief or cognition, an assertion about the sequence that factually accounts for the existence of the problem" (Gusfield, 1980, p. 13). In short, it is an explanation of the problem. Political responsibility "asserts that somebody or some office is obligated to do something about the problem, to eradicate or alleviate the harmful situation (Gusfield, 1980, pp.13-14). In short, it is the solution; a matter of



social policy. Consequently, social actors who can claim ownership to the problem can assign both causal and political responsibility to it.

### **The Social Definitional Approach Applied**

It seems that three major contestatory definitions of the literacy problem can be located within the literature and used to make sense of the social problem of literacy. They are literacy as skills, literacy as information, and literacy as critique.

#### **Literacy as Skills**

One prominent approach to the literacy problem is the functional literacy or functional competency definition. This definition views the problem of illiteracy in terms of the lack of skills needed to be competent or to function adequately in a modern society (Hunter & Harman, 1985).

If we closely examine the skills definition, we find an emphasis on skills as defined by individuals themselves. That is, individuals should decide what skills and abilities they need (Hunter and Harman 1985). This is a definition in keeping with the overall ideology of a liberal capitalist democracy.

When we shift to the definition of literacy used in Jump Start, we find an emphasis on work related skills linking the literacy problem to economic productivity (Chisman, 1989). Both approaches place the emphasis on individual skills acquisition. By stressing the individual, the skills definition is consistent with the selective tradition (Williams, 1977) of liberal democracy theory and the achievement principle upon which the modern industrial capitalist society is based.

In terms of the claims-making activity of the skills definition, Chisman (1989) argues that if the U. S. wants to maintain its standard of living, then the problem of workplace literacy needs to be solved. Furthermore he suggests that literacy is necessary for participation in the public sphere. However, it is not primarily a concern with the lack of participation in public life that is foremost on Chisman's mind, rather it is a concern with economic productivity. He (1989) writes:

All other concerns aside, there is no way in which the United States can maintain the health of its economy, fend off foreign competition, improve productivity, and, in general, maintain its standard of living unless we substantially increase the skills of our workforce (p. 2).

In terms of causal responsibility, the factuality of the problem of illiteracy is tied to a number of social ills ranging from crime, poverty, and a declining productivity. Education is seen as a major cause of the literacy problem. Schools are failing America's children, who are dropping out of school in large numbers. The 20 million or so individuals who lack skills to become productive and functional members of society need to be given a second chance.

The political responsibility for doing something about the problem calls for a national commitment with the federal government playing a role. Hunter and Harman (1985) place responsibility on community based organizations with assistance from the government. For Chisman (1989) the federal government has a major initial role to play in doing something about the problem. The federal role is to jump start the national effort; that is, it should provide the initial spark for a national effort to solve the problem of illiteracy and then allow the states and local agencies to maintain the energy. In keeping with former President Reagan's new federalism, the federal government can provide leadership, but it cannot solve the problem. This type

of political responsibility is in keeping with the conservative drift of U.S. society and represents the conservative dimension of liberal democracy wherein the government plays a minimal role in the life of civil society (Held, 1987).

Neither Harman and Hunter nor Chisman raise the more fundamental question about the nature of contemporary modern society itself. The literacy as skills approach does not call into question the basic structure of society, due in part, to the emphasis placed on individuals, and the "content neutral" approach of the teaching of literacy skills. In the end, the skills approach attempts to assimilate the disadvantage into mainstream society without calling into question the idea that the way society is organized may have something to do with the problem of illiteracy.

### Literacy as Information

The second major competing definition of literacy is cultural literacy or literacy as information. Hirsch (1987) writes that "to be culturally literate is to possess the basic information needed to thrive in the modern World" (p. xiii). This definition of literacy may not seem directly related to adult literacy education, but it is, in that when people learn to read they are reading something which has content. The content carries cultural meanings.

Hirsch's Cultural Literacy (1987) and Bloom's The Closing of the American Mind (1987) represent a significant shift away from the skills approach to literacy to an informational approach to literacy. In other words, there is a shift away from the literacy skills tied to economic production toward literacy information tied to cultural production (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1988). While Hirsch (1987) would agree that cultural literacy facilitates economic transactions, the concern with the lack of cultural literacy is because "Americans" do not know enough basic information; they lack knowledge about the traditions of Western civilization.

Both Hirsch (1987) and Bloom (1987) claim that what is at stake is the survival of Western civilization itself. Bloom advocates a return to the great books approach which would make up a core curriculum required for college students and by extension could become part of the curriculum of Adult Basic Education (ABE). The great books would be recognized classical texts of Western civilization. In the appendix of his book, Hirsch (1987) puts forth a list of words which literate individuals should know. In both cases, the claim is made that if the U. S. is to maintain its leadership role in the world, all Americans (including those who want to become Americans) should have a unity of knowledge, a shared core of information, including those individuals who are becoming literate.

In terms of assigning causal responsibility for the literacy problem, Hirsch and Bloom blame the educational system. In particular, Hirsch (1987) locates the reasons for the current state of cultural illiteracy in the pluralistic, laissez-faire, decentralized school system. This fragmented state of American education has ended up decreasing the shared body of knowledge that Americans need.

Bloom (1987) blames the 1960s, popular culture, divorce, feminism, cultural diversity, and relativism for the decline in cultural literacy. In short, American society is declining because of modernity and the only way to save America is to return to the classics, that is, to the traditions of classical Greek philosophy and Judeo-Christian religion.

Bloom and Hirsch assign political responsibility to the educational system. As mentioned above, Bloom (1987) calls for a return to a core liberal arts curriculum at the college and university level. By extension this call could be incorporated into the

lower levels of education including ABE programs. Hirsch (1987) also calls for the establishment of a core curriculum which consists of an extensive curriculum and an intensive curriculum. The extensive curriculum "constitutes the part of the curriculum that has to be known by every child and must be common to all the schools of the nation" (Hirsch 1987, p. 128). For example, it would include some knowledge about Romeo and Juliet. The intensive curriculum would provide flexibility and might require a detailed study of The Tempest or Twelfth Night.

### Literacy as Critique

The third major definitional approach is critical literacy identified with the work of Paulo Freire and his many followers. While other individuals could be cited, such as Miles Horton and Jonathan Kozol, my focus will be on Freire.

From the literacy as critique definition, the literacy problem is a real one. It is important to teach people literacy skills and basic knowledge, however, at the same time people need to be taught to think critically or develop what Freire calls conscientizacao. In other words, the problem of literacy is not just that people lack skills and basic information, they, also, lack the ability to criticize or to read the world (Freire & Macedo 1987). The literacy as critique definition claims that by themselves the skills definition and the information definition are part of the problem. In other words, for Freire (1988) to be literate is to think critically about the world so that one can intervene in society to change not only oneself but society as well.

The critical literacy approach is well aware that literacy is embedded in a set of ideological interests. This approach is rooted in an emancipatory interest. It is different from the skills approach which takes a value neutral approach (technical rationality interest) and it is different from the information approach of Hirsch and Bloom which takes a cultural conservative perspective. Critical literacy is interested in social and individual transformation. It claims that the other two approaches to the literacy problem are hindrances to social and individual change.

Critical literacy also claims that the problem of literacy is a problem of societal power arrangements. In particular, it claims that the causal responsibility for the literacy problem is the way in which society is structured to benefit the few at the expense of the many and how this power arrangement is related to education (Apple, 1990). From Freire's point of view, the reason that there are illiterates in some Third World countries is due, in part, to the dominant class consciously deciding not to educate the population. Freire and Macedo (1987) argue that in the U.S. the school system did not fail those who are considered to be illiterate or functionally illiterate; instead, the school system is actually quite successful.

The political responsibility for doing something about the problem is given to progressive educators who do not want to maintain the status quo, but who want to change society (toward a just society). This requires that progressive educators must develop political clarity which allows for the linkage between social theory and practice. A person who has political clarity "is one who has transcended the perception of life as a pure biological process to arrive at a perception of life as a biographical, historical, and collective process" (Freire and Macedo 1987, p. 130). Progressive educators in carrying out their political responsibilities, must understand the various levels of resistance to education by the oppressed groups. In addition, progressive educators must understand how the experiences of the oppressed groups are expressed in their everyday culture. Unlike the pedagogical approach used by literacy as information which tends to be authoritarian, the pedagogical approach

used by progressive educators must be democratic and dialogical which actively brings students into the educational process. It is only through such democratic pedagogical approaches that the literacy crisis can be resolved.

### Conclusion

After critically discussing three contestory definitions of literacy using the social definitional approach, it appears to me that if literacy educators are serious about addressing the problem of literacy, then the most appropriate definition of the problem is the critical one. Both literacy as skills and literacy as information end up maintaining the status quo because these two definitions fail to address the basic social conditions which give rise to the crisis in the first place. Literacy as critique does address the social conditions which foster illiteracy. It is only by addressing social conditions that the crisis can be resolved. Furthermore, literacy as critique not only incorporates literacy as skills and literacy as information--no serious critical educator would deny that skills and information are important, but standing alone they can not solve the problem--but this definition of the problem allows literacy educators a way of defining the root causes of the crisis and then addressing these causes through democratic education.

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## THE EFFECTS OF INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT ON CRITICAL THINKING IN THE WORKPLACE

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this research was to identify and describe the critical thinking (CT) skills and dispositional traits that are evident in professional practice. The interrelation and interaction of the essential skills for CT can be described. However, dispositional traits and organizational factors and their collective impact on CT must be considered. The importance of consideration of the context when attempting to explain or facilitate CT in practice is advocated.

### Introduction

The adult education literature focuses on the development of CT and related issues regarding theory, learning, teaching, ethical considerations, and sociopolitical concerns. Furthermore, the majority of CT research is based upon students' cognitive performance within academic institutions of higher education. Consequently, little is known about the nature of CT in adults' professional practice. This study was not specifically designed to investigate the effects of institutional context on CT in the workplace. However, the multi-subject and multi-site design of this study made it possible to examine the effects of institutional context on CT. During data collection and analysis, it became evident that organizational factors which shape the institutional context influence CT and partly explain the nature of CT in the workplace.

### Conceptual Framework

Studies of CT have resulted in a variety of conceptions and theories of CT evident in the literature (Kurfiss, 1988). Earlier theories focus on formal and informal logic, or in recent years, focus on problem solving (Meyers, 1986; Smith, 1991). It is only within the last ten to fifteen years that educators and researchers have begun to explore the practical and reflective aspects of CT as described by Dewey over a century ago (Brookfield, 1987; McPeck, 1990; Mezirow, 1990). Even more recently, Paul (1990) calls for a distinction between weak sense and strong sense CT. Paul (1990) regards the conception of narrow, weak sense CT as skills related to logic and problem solving which can be applied to other learning, but remain extrinsic to the character of the person. CT in the strong sense is integrated within the individual with insight into the thinking and feeling processes. Paul (1990) emphasizes CT in the strong sense as essential to the free, rational, and autonomous mind and extends logic to the critical examination of controversial social, ethical, political, economic, and religious issues. The theories and viewpoints of critical thinking and critical reflectivity expressed by Brookfield (1987) and Mezirow (1990) are consistent with the current literature on CT in the strong sense as described by Paul (1990).

For purposes of this study, CT is not solely intellectual or cognitive activity. The reflective, communicative, experiential, practical, and social aspects of CT were incorporated into the conceptual framework to include strong sense CT and to acknowledge the complexity of professional practice. The following definition was adopted for this study (Paul, 1991):

Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action. (p. 4)

This definition of CT acknowledges that the mind must be intellectually disciplined in order to take into account the interests of diverse groups of people and to overcome natural tendencies to think egocentrically and sociocentrically (Brookfield, 1987; Mezirow, 1990, 1991; Paul, 1990, 1991). Intellectual discipline is further required to achieve rich constructs of CT that transcend European and Western ideals of critical discourse and critical rationality. Consequently, we can overcome tendencies to misuse CT and engage in sophist thinking which subordinates marginal groups in favor of a dominant culture (Paul, 1990).

This definition further acknowledges the intellectual and internal processes of inductive and deductive reasoning. Although no one would argue the intellectual, logical, and problem solving dimensions of CT, it is insufficient to equate CT with only these aspects. The last part of the definition acknowledges the features of CT which guide belief and action within a social context. Merely analyzing the validity of arguments is not equivalent to CT; rather, adults must consider evidence found in the shared world through reflection and communication. For thinking to be critical, it is necessary that ideas, beliefs, and actions be validated through critical reflection and critical discourse with others (Brookfield, 1987; Garrison, 1991, 1992; Giroux, 1991; Habermas, 1990; Mezirow, 1990, 1991; Paul, 1990, 1991). Furthermore, the reflective and communicative aspects are essential for strong sense CT. Intellectual discipline and the related traits of CT are necessary to incorporate postmodernist perspectives of gender, culture, diversity, subordination and domination and can be acquired through strong sense CT.

### Methodology

A qualitative, descriptive research design was most appropriate because this study was intended to discover, understand, and gain insight into CT with the focus on process. An inductive method of inquiry using the constant comparative approach provided the opportunity to study the contextual, social, and individual aspects of CT in professional practice. The research methodology consisted primarily of observations and interviews of participants working in healthcare followed by in-depth interviews. Data were collected over a period of one year during 36 hours of interviews and 125 hours of observation. The observations allowed firsthand witnessing of how CT emerges in practice. The observations served as a basis for identifying and describing the situations which required CT, as well as the skills and traits. A purposeful sample of 18 registered respiratory therapists with at least five years of experience, who worked in critical care, and earned either a BS or AS Degree was chosen using reputational-case selection. The participants worked in 25 intensive care units at eight different hospitals.

### Findings

The findings describe the multidimensional nature of critical thinking in adults' professional practice. The findings elaborate on the individual and social nature of CT and describe the interrelationships among the practitioners' skills, related traits, and

organizational factors that impact CT in practice (Mishoe, 1994). CT in practice involves the abilities to prioritize, troubleshoot, communicate, negotiate, reflect and make decisions (Mishoe & Courtenay, 1994). When, how and why practitioners are able to use CT in practice is affected by dispositional traits and organizational factors. The findings suggest that these dispositional traits are essential to CT in practice: willingness to reconsider, appreciation of multiple perspectives, willingness to challenge others, broad perspective of their profession, continuing to learn, and openness to continuing change. The findings also indicate that there are greater opportunities for CT in practice when there is a supportive director, strong departmental leadership with a progressive climate, a liberal scope of practice, and clearly specified role delineations. It appears that when contextual factors, such as an unsupportive director, inhibit CT in the workplace, the traits of the practitioners play a larger role in the development and utility of critical thinking.

### Role of the Director

The role that the director plays within the department\division either facilitates or inhibits CT in practice. A supportive director can facilitate CT whereas an unsupportive director will actually stifle CT. The participants were most likely to use CT as evidenced by the ways they communicated, negotiated, and shared decision making, when there was strong support and involvement from the director. Furthermore, the participants appeared more relaxed and at ease when making recommendations at those organizations with supportive directors. The participants were frequently asked for their suggestions and opinions regarding patient care and solving problems in the workplace. The participants were encouraged to make recommendations and to actively participate in decision making. Furthermore, the participants were more confident when making recommendations, willing to challenge others with authority, and involved in decision making. The skills and attitudes for CT identified by this study were most frequently observed at institutions with the most supportive directors.

Several of the participants were able to compare and contrast their practice and how it was affected or changed with different directors. In every case, when the director was involved and supportive, the participants assumed a larger role in communicating, negotiating, and decision making. These participants also reflected more often on their decisions, their practice, and their profession. Consequently, there were greater opportunities for CT in their practice. Increased opportunities to communicate, negotiate, make decisions, and reflect can lead to the further development of the professionals' skills and traits for CT in their practice.

### Departmental Leadership and Climate

Departmental leadership and climate of the department also affect CT in practice. The participants in this study were keenly aware of the level of expectations and leadership from departmental and organizational administrators. It was apparent that the participants' willingness to take risks, challenge others, appreciate multiple perspectives, initiate change, and use CT skills were related to the climate of the department, which could be described as follows: progressive and innovative (ahead of the times), current and satisfactory (up-to-date), and status quo (behind the times). In almost every case, the administrators were instrumental in determining the overall climate of the institution and the departments.



Only one of the settings in this sample could be described as status quo, but even at that institution there were examples of innovative and collaborative approaches to solving problems in the workplace. The majority of sites can be described as current or up-to-date. The participants had access to the latest technology and were instrumental in introducing the newest approaches to practice. Approximately one-third of the institutions in this sample can be described as progressive. At these institutions, there were formal and informal opportunities for the staff to participate in the administration and evaluation of the department and institution. There was also evidence of mechanisms for self-assessment. Collaboration among management and the staff was evident. The climate was open to trying out new ideas and CT was encouraged.

### Scope of Practice

Opportunities for CT in practice are also determined, in part, by the professionals' scope of practice within the organization. Every institution had differences and variations in the duties and responsibilities of the practitioners. Scope of practice determines what duties and responsibilities are handled by one group of professionals, shared with others, or handled by others. The opportunities to perform certain duties/responsibilities can facilitate or inhibit CT.

The findings suggest that performing technical skills or psychomotor skills in and of itself does not necessarily facilitate CT. For example, if the practitioners obtained diagnostic data, but did not discuss the results with physicians to influence decision making, then the skill itself did not necessarily promote CT. Once a skill is mastered, the activity itself does not necessarily promote CT. If too much of the practitioners' time is spent performing technical skills, CT in practice can actually be limited because there can be decreased opportunities for communication, negotiation, decision making, and reflecting. However, CT is enhanced if performing certain tasks results in increased opportunities to share decision making in practice.

### Role Delineations

In practice, it is not unusual to find lesser qualified individuals performing the same duties and responsibilities as the professionals who have appropriate levels of formal training, continuing education, and professional credentials. In professional practice, there are often distinct credentialing mechanisms which specify differences in training and competencies for groups of professionals. However, separate role delineations are not necessarily implemented in the workplace. At the institution with the status quo department, there were no differences in pay or responsibilities between technicians and therapists. In several other settings, although there were differences in pay between the groups, there were few distinctions made in practice. When this occurred, the level of practice and opportunities for CT were limited and gravitated toward the technician level. Although not studied, it is speculated that the technicians who worked in these settings probably had greater opportunities for CT in practice.

At over half of the institutions in this sample, there were distinct role delineations and the greatest opportunities for CT in the workplace. It appears that when there are clear and distinct role delineations in practice based upon training, competencies, and credentials, there is greater "blanket credibility" for that group of professionals. Blanket credibility refers to the established performance and scope of practice for a group of professionals. When blanket credibility was not evident, then

professionals had to prove themselves in order to achieve individual credibility. The participants expressed concern that professional credibility and opportunities for decision making were limited when role delineations were less evident.

### Discussion

Although a description of the essential skills and related traits can explain CT in practice, the explanation is incomplete. To adequately address the nature of CT in adults' professional practice, it is equally important to discuss contextual variables within the workplace. The institutional context influences the degree to which CT is encouraged, expected, or even tolerated. All of the participants in this study demonstrated the essential skills for CT. However, organizational variables affected when, how, and why CT was evident in practice. As adult educators, we should not presume that a rich construct of CT in the strong sense is well-entrenched in Western Culture, in our educational institutions, and in our organizational climates.

The findings offer further evidence on the important relationship between the skills of critical thinking and the related traits of the critical thinker (Facione, 1990; Paul, 1990). When contextual factors actually inhibit CT in the workplace, the dispositional traits of the practitioner play a greater role in the development and utility of CT. For example, the participants' willingness to challenge authority was particularly important to negotiate decisions when there was limited support in the workplace. The therapists who were more willing to challenge authority and question norms were more likely to exhibit CT, regardless of constraints in the workplace. These findings support the claim that the personal context of the practitioner affects clinical reasoning (Gambrell, 1990; Schell & Cervero, 1993). There is also evidence that when individuals cross from one cultural context to another, the dispositional traits of the individual determine the degree to which CT is evident. In an ethnographic study of Chinese immigrants, Hemphill (1994) found that crossing from one cultural context to another did not in itself lead to serious questioning of prevailing norms, but the prior experience of critical reflection in the home culture appeared to build a similar capacity in the new culture. Further research is needed to determine how sociocultural, organizational, and contextual factors influence and interact with dispositional traits in the development and utility of professionals' critical thinking in practice. Regardless, the evidence thus far suggests that traits and the personal context, as well as contextual variables, are important in the utility of CT within a culture, society, or organization.

It appears that pragmatic reasoning as described by Schell and Cervero (1993) is equally important or perhaps more important than scientific reasoning in professional practice. Pragmatic reasoning encompasses contextual and personal factors that affect clinical reasoning. The findings from this study indicate that practitioners often give pragmatic reasons which reflect contextual considerations as well as dispositional traits, to explain decisions and behaviors in their practice. Although the experts in this study could not usually give reasons for their decisions in practice, when reasons were stated, they often revealed practical considerations. Many of the practical considerations reflected the organizational factors which either limit or enhance CT. This study demonstrated that although practitioners act intuitively and often cannot articulate their reasons for decision making in practice, in order to negotiate effectively with others they must be able to provide reasons and evidence.

This study demonstrates the important role that administrators have in establishing organizational climates that can foster CT. At progressive institutions, there was evidence of group and self-assessment strategies. This research supports the findings of Marienau (1994) who found that self-assessment facilitated work-related learning including critical reflection on experience and CT as it relates to problem solving and decision making.

Other authors described how clinical judgement, also called clinical reasoning, can be seriously limited by the practice setting (Biklen, 1988; Davis & Aroskar, 1991; Gambrill, 1990). For example, Gambrill (1990) describes how decisions in the practice of psychology are affected by preferred views of clients\patients, available resources, social pressures, political preconditions, and whether the practice is private versus agency based. Davis and Aroskar (1991) discuss organizational and social constraints that limit ethical reasoning and decision-making abilities in nursing. Barris (1987) found that hospital setting, patient population, and department tradition had more influence on clinical reasoning than did the practitioners' beliefs and attitudes. Biklen (1988) goes so far as to state that economic, political, bureaucratic, prejudicial, and traditional factors render clinical judgement to little more than mythology in the context of special education. In this study, it was found that the practitioners would make their recommendations to physicians in the form of a question and modified their suggestions based upon the particular physician managing the patient, rather than rely on their best judgment.

Cervero (1990, 1992), Gambrill (1990) and Larson (1979) argue further that professionals must understand broad sociopolitical factors that affect their practice. Professionals must understand the historical, cultural, structural, and political preconditions that affect their practice in order to appreciate the nature of practitioners' decisions, as well as the limitations and potential of the professions. The development of any profession occurs in a particular economic, political, and social context which influences what is created (Larson, 1979). The results of this research suggest that without an appreciation of the organizational factors that affect CT in practice, the relativity of clinical decisions cannot be appreciated and questionable decisions are likely to be made. Also, it is likely that professionals will assume blame for inadequacies in their practice when in fact, many decisions and other opportunities for CT are out of the practitioners' control (Davis & Aroskar, 1991; Gambrill, 1990).

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## Lost in Space: Mathematics Education for Adults

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*This study considered the teaching of mathematics to adults. The constraints on teaching processes result in an inadequate response to adult innumeracy.*

### Background

The mathematical abilities of Americans regularly give cause for concern to government bodies, business and community leaders, and adult and mathematics educators. There is a strong consensus, amongst these groups, that the mathematical skills, awareness, and understanding of adult learners, whether high school leavers or college graduates, have deteriorated alarmingly in recent years. Adults know less, understand less, have little facility with simple mathematical operations, and find difficulty in solving any but the shortest and simplest of mathematical problems.

So what? Millions of people appear to function perfectly well without ever needing to use much of the mathematics that they remember from school. No one claims to be particularly disadvantaged by a lack of mathematical abilities. In addition, many people see mathematics as an esoteric subject having little to do with their everyday lives. Indeed, mathematics commonly represents a body of ultimately abstract, objective and timeless truths, far removed from the concerns and values of humanity. If mathematics seems so tangential to everyday life, why is it such a problem if so many people can't do math very well?

Primarily it is a problem because of the societal and individual consequences of innumeracy. Numeracy--mathematical ability--is commonly recognized as a major determinant for job and career choices, and a key to economic productivity and success in modern, industrial societies. Numeracy, then, functions as "cultural capital." Hence, the extent of mathematical ability operates as a social filter, and access to social effectiveness and privilege is restricted to those with sufficient mathematical ability.

It doesn't start out that way. Indeed, numeracy is one of the major intended outcomes of schooling, and mathematics occupies a central position in virtually every school curriculum. But somehow, mathematics teaching fails to produce numerate adults. As Western society has become increasingly informationally and technologically saturated, the innumerate are increasingly disadvantaged--confused and manipulated by numbers, unable to critically assess assumptions and logical fallacies, and unable to participate as effective and informed citizens. For example, how often are adults prepared to take statistical information and their stated conclusions at face value? How many of us feel skilled enough to look beyond the numbers to interpret what the statistics mean? Of particular concern is the underlying pattern of inequity in adult numeracy; surveys of mathematical abilities show that performance is lower among working class, women, Hispanic, and Afro-American learners. So, mathematics is important if only because it is capable of empowering so many.

Why are adults' mathematical abilities as low as they are? The primary contributor appears to be the poor teaching in school mathematics classrooms (Frankenstein, 1981; Paulos, 1988). Traditionally, mathematics education is taught as an abstract and hierarchical series of objective and decontextualized facts, rules, and answers. Further, predominant teaching methods use largely passive, authoritarian, and individualizing techniques that depend on memorization, rote calculation, and frequent testing (Bishop, 1988). Knowledge is thus portrayed as largely separate from learners' thought processes, and mathematics education is experienced as a static, rather than dynamic process. Adults who do wish to upgrade their mathematical skills have access to a variety of courses run by local public sector educational bodies. It is unclear, however, if these courses are, in any way, adult-oriented, or merely reproduce the curricula and teaching methods so common in traditional K-12 mathematics. Given the rapid decline in adult numeracy, the nature of its social consequences, and the apparent inadequacy of current educational approaches to remedy it, this study of the teaching processes in adult mathematics classrooms is both timely and necessary.

### The Study

#### Purpose

This study explored the teaching processes in mathematics education for adults and how they are shaped by certain social and institutional forces. Teaching processes include the selection of content to be taught; the choice of such techniques as lectures or groupwork; the expectations, procedures and norms of the classroom; and the complex web of interactions between teachers and learners, and between learners themselves. The study addressed three broad questions: (1) What happens in adult mathematics classrooms? (2) What do these phenomena mean for those involved as teachers or learners? and (3) In what ways do "frame factors" (factors beyond the teachers' control) affect teaching processes?

#### Theoretical Framework

A large part of the context of teaching consists of the thinking, planning, and decision-making of teachers. Clark and Peterson (1986) developed a model that relates teachers' thoughts to their actions considering such aspects as teacher planning, the interaction between teachers' thoughts and decisions, and teachers' theories and beliefs. It is based on an interpretive perspective that addresses such questions as, for example, differences in meaning regarding learners' achievements, and the teacher's role in classroom interactions.

A thorough discussion of teaching processes must also include an understanding of factors that impinge upon such processes. Frame factor theory (Lundgren, 1981) analyzes the ways in which teaching processes are chosen, developed, and constrained by certain frames. Briefly, a frame is "any factor that limits the teaching process and is determined outside of the control of teacher or students" (p. 36). Examples of frames include physical settings, aspects of the curriculum such as the syllabus or the textbooks, and organizational arrangements such as the size of the class, the number of lessons, and the time available for teaching. Frame factor theory claims that teaching processes are governed by "the possible freedom of action which exists in a given situation" (p. 150), rather than

being causally determined. The frames mark out the limits that teaching processes can have; the actual teaching is conducted within these limits.

The theoretical framework of this study, therefore, links these two approaches and offers an analytical perspective that shows how teachers' thoughts and actions are circumscribed by factors beyond their control.

### Related Literature

Although extensive research examines mathematics education for children, there is little corresponding research on such education for adults (Gal, 1993). However, most published discussions of adults' mathematical abilities suggest that poor mathematics teaching in K-12 schools is a significant contributor to the high levels of adult innumeracy. Most of these discussions are written either from the viewpoint of government or industry leaders (e.g., National Research Council, 1989) or from that of university professors of mathematics (e.g., Paulos, 1988; Willoughby, 1990). These viewpoints overwhelmingly reflect either policy-making and managerial perspectives or the academic research interests of the profession. Further, they are often based on narrow technical and instrumental models of education that ignore much adult learning theory and the importance of such issues as self-concept, motivation, values, attitudes, and intentions in learning. What is clearly missing are the experiences and attitudes of those most intimately involved in mathematics education: adult learners and their teachers.

### Methods

The study was based in a typical setting for adult mathematics education: a community college providing a range of ABE-level mathematics courses for adults. Three introductory-level courses (each taught by different teachers) were selected and data collected from teachers and students in these courses, as well as material that related to the teaching and learning of mathematics within the college. The study used a variety of data collection methods in addition to document collection: surveys of teachers' and adult learners' attitudes, repeated semi-structured interviews with teachers and learners, and extensive ethnographic observations in several mathematics classes. Several lessons were video-recorded and later used as the basis for "stimulated recall" interviews with the teachers concerned. All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed for subsequent data analysis. The complete data set was then coded and initial concepts and categories from the theoretical framework were linked into broader themes and patterns to develop increasingly complex concepts and assertions. Finally, the data set was again systematically searched for both disconfirming and confirming data to support all claims and assertions.

### Findings

From observations of actual episodes and activities in mathematics classrooms, several key themes were identified. First, within the classroom, the teacher's role was paramount. Almost all decisions about classroom activities were made by teachers; the learners' influence was minimal. Further, teachers made their choices with little consideration for the needs and interests of their learners. The overall goal for most teachers was to "cover the assigned material" without losing too many students along the way. Teachers appeared to make their decisions largely to suit themselves, regardless of the needs of students, although they often described their decisions as being "in the students' best interests."



Teachers subtly reinforced the idea that mathematics is largely a difficult and intrinsically uninteresting subject, full of "tricks," and best tackled by motivation, hard work, and repeated practice. Only one method of learning mathematics was promoted: learn a rule, then apply it repeatedly until its use becomes almost automatic. This pedagogical approach was followed rigorously by teachers who, without exception, structured their lessons into a cyclic pattern of presentation practice, and assessment. Teachers adopted a largely teacher-centered approach: they assumed that their own attitudes were common or preferred, they rarely asked students any questions or fostered a spirit of discovery, they "helped" the students to find right answers, they seldom checked student comprehension, they focused on errors, and they used complicated and often idiomatic language which often confused students (particularly non-native English speakers). Although the courses took place in a classroom--a social setting--teachers tended to work mostly with individual students, fostered competition, and limited the opportunities for student interaction and discussion.

Second, the teacher and the set textbooks adopted the role of supreme authorities of mathematical knowledge. Mathematics was transmitted through either the textbook or the teachers' explanations, and never presented as a subject to be created or investigated. Indeed, students were given few opportunities to explore mathematical concepts for themselves, and, when those opportunities occurred by chance, they were largely ignored by teachers. Consequently, students assumed that being successful in mathematics meant being adept at calculation regardless of knowing the reasons for making those calculations in the first place. Within each course, achievement was almost totally determined by regular assessment tests, with their form and content taken directly from the textbook. Teachers repeatedly stressed that such tests were essential preparation (either academically or vocationally) for the future, regardless of the specific goals of the students.

Third, adult learners were assigned a passive role in their own education. Adults entered the courses, initially cowed by both their lack of mathematical ability and by the unfamiliar academic environment, and were forced to take part in a series of activities that, although mathematically-based, often seemed meaningless and irrelevant to them. They largely accepted this, believing that teachers knew the most appropriate ways to increase learning, and that the mathematics would "get more interesting later on." Despite differences in their background, experiences, expectations, abilities and interests--all rich resources for learning--adult students were all required to perform the same work. Further, because little time was given over for discussion, they had few opportunities to debate how the mathematics they were learning could relate to their lives.

### Discussion

Interactions in mathematics classrooms must be viewed not only in educational and pedagogical terms, but also as social experiences. Within the classroom, students not only learn mathematics but also classroom norms about how to behave, how to learn, how to react to the demands of teaching and assessment, how to please teachers, as well as what they need to do to pass the course.

The findings of this study support the contention that adult learners in mathematics classrooms are largely socialized into believing that their own

experiences, concerns, and purposes are of little value. Students' life situations are never asked about, or rarely acknowledged as potential examples of mathematics in use. In this way, life is subjugated to mathematics, teachers imply that anything students have to contribute is of little relevance or value, and the teacher's non-accountable and authoritarian role is emphasized. Further, because possession of mathematical knowledge is seen as governing learners' future occupational and economic roles, mathematics is used to instill the values that Western society regards as necessary in its workforce: individualism, passivity, obedience to authority, and competition. Thus, the social experience of the mathematics classroom is strangely paradoxical. On the one hand, students' actual life experiences are treated as irrelevant, while on the other, the teacher, the text, and the teaching methods promote an explicit set of experiences and problems as mathematically valid, appropriate and relevant. The values inherent in these may often be inappropriate or at odds with those actually held by the students. At the very least, learning mathematics is portrayed as the acceptance of, and obedience to, the authority of others, rather than as a process of discovery, awakening, or understanding. Contrast this with adult educators' approach to virtually any other subject area, and the rigidity of the approach towards mathematics is immediately apparent.

Basing teaching so closely on mathematics textbooks is questionable. First, textbooks often transform the subject matter in confusing and illogical ways. For example, mathematics is commonly presented as a hierarchical series of tiny sections to be mastered sequentially. Learners get few opportunities to discover how mathematical concepts are interrelated, or to practice their skills across a series of content areas. Second, teachers lose the opportunities to develop a richer understanding. Although textbooks aim to "enable students to thoroughly understand mathematical concepts"; such "understanding" often merely refers to students' abilities to successfully reproduce the textbook's definitions and procedures rather than any deeper understandings or insights. Students, thus, may develop what Skemp (1976) calls "instrumental" understanding--being able to follow rules--without ever developing any "relational" understanding--knowing both what to do and why. This inability to develop relational understanding creates the levels of adult innumeracy that so alarm government, business, and educational bodies.

Reinforcing a distinction between formal "classroom" mathematics and informal, "real-life" mathematics prevents students from encountering and dealing with examples and practices of mathematics in their own ways, or in ways that are appropriate to their own lives. When students are faced with a mathematical problem in the classroom they are encouraged to disregard their own experience, intuition, and existing problem-solving skills (which they would be expected to use if such a problem occurred in the real world) and, instead, to accurately follow the steps laid down in the textbook and explicated by the teacher. Solving "real life" mathematical problems involves the use of relational knowledge, mathematical intuition, and finding partial solutions, as much as the ability to calculate accurately and quickly. Yet these are precisely the skills not developed by a focus on individual motivation, not best developed by sequential one-rule memorization, and not likely to arise from "pure" cognitive insights removed from the contexts of students' actual lives.

Thus, it would seem that the rigidity with which mathematics is conceptualized initiates a series of reactions. Teachers, believing that mathematics is complex, pure,

and conceptually hierarchical, align themselves as interpreters of its truths rather than developers of students' insights. Texts, timetables, and tests are raised to an unexamined dominance in classroom management, and pedagogical problems become fixed and localized in individual students rather than in other arenas.

Finally, the effects of certain frames on teaching processes can be discerned. The institutional settings of adult education portray mathematics education as one part of a system of "lifelong education" that provide opportunities for individuals to engage in purposeful and systematic learning throughout their lives. However, within those settings, the mathematical curricula and pedagogies chosen reflect predominantly vocational concerns and often outdated notions of appropriate mathematical skills and knowledge. Certainly, the chosen textbooks (upon which so much of the teaching is based) carry quite different messages from those of educators, and promote dominant values of individualism, competition, passivity, and obedience to authority. Finally, the previous life and professional experiences of adult learners and teachers do not encourage critical examination of course methods or content. Teachers promote (and learners accept) the notion that hard work and motivation are sufficient; they will enable students to pass the courses. What is left unexamined and unacknowledged are the myriad circumstances and applications of mathematics to the real world.

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## Measuring the Public's Perceptions of Adult Basic Education

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**Abstract.** This study was designed to measure public perception of the need for and quality of adult basic education in Illinois. Using a combination of data collection techniques, including focus groups and interviews with stakeholders, and a telephone survey of randomly selected Illinois residents, this study found a high level of support for continued public funding of adult basic education and a positive attitude toward adult basic education programs in general, but particularly among those with some knowledge of these programs.

**Background.** Education at all levels in the USA is experiencing increased scrutiny by funding agencies from the federal to local levels. In 1994 the United States Department of Education conducted reauthorization hearings for the federal adult education legislation. Recommendations for reauthorization of this legislation are due to Congress in the first quarter of 1995.

In Illinois, the education of adults has been the subject of some concern for more than 20 years. The 1970 revised state constitution expanded the scope of public education to include the educational development of *all persons* to the limits of their capacities. In 1973, the Illinois Superintendent of Public Instruction appointed a task force "charged to formulate a general agreement on practices, procedures and a proposed design of a program of education for adults in Illinois." (Today and Tomorrow, 1974, p. ii) This task force met over a period of 18 months and produced a report that offered a number of recommendations for the funding and coordination of adult education in Illinois. Some of these recommendations were approved by the General Assembly and the Governor in 1981 and implemented in 1983. The report itself represented a significant attempt at a comprehensive examination of the funding and program delivery mechanisms for adult education at the state level.

Nearly twenty years after the commission of the first task force, the Illinois Adult and Continuing Educators Association (IACEA) board directed the association president to appoint a new task force "to review long range plans addressing the goal of a citizenry of literate, lifelong learners; funding of adult education; student access to adult education; programmatic and fiscal accountability and assessment systems for adult education; adult education delivery systems; and other issues that are related to providing a comprehensive adult education system in our state." (Dries, 1992) The fourteen members of this task force represented program providers and other stakeholders from across the state, including public schools and community colleges, corrections, and community-based organizations. At the first meeting of this task force, on December 9, 1992, it was decided that a systematic study of public perceptions of adult basic education in the state would be essential to meeting the goals of the task force as commissioned by IACEA.



**Purpose.** The purpose of this study, therefore, was to determine the *public's* perception of adult basic education programs in Illinois. *Public* refers to the various stakeholders in public adult education, including the learners, classroom instructors, elected policy makers, current and potential employers of graduates of these adult education programs, and the general public of Illinois residents living throughout the state.

**Methodology.** To gather data for this study, the task force decided to conduct focus groups with students and program administrators. Additional focus groups would be conducted with representatives of various agencies which provide services to these programs and to the adult learners. Focus groups have been a common technique for years in market research. More recently, focus groups have attracted the attention of social scientists desiring to study certain phenomena and their effects on groups of stakeholders. For the purpose of this study, a focus group "can be defined as a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, nonthreatening environment." (Krueger, 1988, p. 18)

All focus groups in this study were guided by the following four questions:

1. What are some of the greatest problems facing adult education students today?
2. What changes would you like to see in adult education?
3. What do you think the government should do for adults who have not finished high school?
4. What do you think adult education programs should look like in five to ten years from now?

Focus groups were conducted at program sites and at regional and statewide adult education meetings or conferences, beginning in February 1993 and concluding in May 1993. Focus groups were audio taped and summarized by focus group leaders (usually task force members). All focus group leaders were given specific directions for how to conduct focus groups.

A second source of data was selected policy makers and employers. These stakeholders were interviewed separately and individually using a set of questions similar to those which guided the focus group discussions with students and program providers. Eventually, over 800 learners, instructors, administrators, policy makers, and employers participated in focus groups or interviews for this study.

A third source of data was a statewide telephone survey of Illinois residents conducted during the first week of October, 1994, by the Center for Governmental Studies of Northern Illinois University. This survey included responses from 800 randomly selected adults to a series of questions about different aspects of adult education programs in their communities and in the state as a whole.

**Results.** The focus group activity involved 35 groups with approximately 825 participants (students, classroom instructors, and agency representatives) from programs across the state. In response to Question 1, students identified major barriers to their participation in adult basic education as similar to those identified by Cross (1981) in her analysis of participation in adult education. In our study, learners

identified major situational barriers to participation, including child care, and transportation. In addition, learners cited dispositional barriers of embarrassment, insecurity, and fear of ridicule. Students expressed an interest in more direct assistance by instructors and separation of younger from older learners. This comment stems from the fact that in Illinois, younger ABE participants, those 17 to 19 years old, are often enrolled in classes with older, more mature learners. The younger learners are still not convinced of the need for a high school education and become disruptive in the class, interfering with the learning of those more mature students.

Desired changes cited by students include more teachers, tutors, counselors, and other support staff. More equipment is desired, including computers, books, and other materials. More flexibility in course scheduling and more convenient locations are often cited as well. Better facilities, including food service and day care are also identified as desired changes.

Students identified the government's role as providing funding for programs and financial assistance and job training for learners. Students suggested penalizing drop-outs and cutting public aid to those who do not complete their GED.

As for their vision of adult education programs in the next five to ten years, many cited improved facilities and job training. Also frequently cited was better coordination of programs and elimination of duplicate and irrelevant courses.

Agencies who participated in focus group sessions responded in similar themes to students and instructors. Greatest problems identified by agencies include lack of employment and the growing disenfranchisement of the uneducated poor.

Agency representatives more frequently identified dysfunctional families and negative peer influences as major problems. They also saw an important role for government of providing support, job opportunities, mandatory courses, and more funding to improve access to more programs.

Another major theme coming from agencies was the importance of more collaboration and networking for improved programs. At the same time, agencies expressed concern for duplication of services.

Results from interviews with elected policy makers and private sector employers revealed a high level of support for adult education, especially by those who know programs in their communities. Those individuals who have some acquaintance with adult education programs tend to have higher regard for them.

Data for measuring the general public's perceptions of adult basic education came from the telephone survey of 800 randomly selected adult residents. The telephone survey was done as part of a statewide policy survey of Illinois conducted annually since 1984. According to the director, "this poll is designed to provide citizens and state leaders with systematic and representative information on public attitudes, values, and expectations with respect to the performance of state government and important policy issues facing Illinois." (Dran, 1993, p. 3)

A selection of the questions asked, and their responses, include:

1. Thinking about adults age 18 and over in your community, about how many do you think lack skills in basic reading and writing that they need for jobs and everyday living?

Table 1			
	Freq	Pct	Cum %
A lot	182	22.7	22.7
Some	341	42.6	65.3
Hardly any	242	30.2	95.5
Won't answer	4	.5	96.0
Don't know	32	4.0	100.0
Total	800	100.0	

2. How about in Illinois as a whole? About how many adults do you think lack skills in basic reading and writing that they need for jobs and everyday living?

Table 2			
	Freq	Pct	Cum %
A lot	302	37.7	37.7
Some	405	50.7	88.4
Hardly any	36	4.4	92.8
Won't answer	6	.8	93.5
Don't know	52	6.4	93.5
Total	800	100.0	

**Discussion.** Respondents tend to think of their community as having fewer members lacking basic reading and writing skills than in the state as a whole. In other words, respondents agree there is a problem, but it tends to exist in other communities more than in their own community.

3. Do you know of any programs in your community that provide basic education in reading and writing skills for adults?

Table 3			
	Freq	Pct	Cum %
Yes	383	47.8	47.8
No	396	49.5	97.4
Won't answer	1	.1	97.5
Don't know	20	2.5	100.0
Total	800	100.0	

4. From what you know of these programs, do you think they provide the basic skills in reading and writing that these people need?

Table 4				
	Freq	Pct	Adj %	Cum %
Yes	319	39.9	83.4	83.4
No	7	.9	1.9	85.3
Won't answer	1	.1	.2	85.5
Don't know	55	6.9	14.5	100.0
Not asked	417	52.2	Missing	
Total	800	100.0		

**Discussion.** Of the 383 respondents to question 3 who indicated some knowledge of programs in their community that provide basic literacy instruction for adults, 319 (83.4%) were willing to say they think these programs provide the basic skills in literacy that these people need. This would indicate a high level of support for ABE programs from those who know about them.

A similar set of questions asked about community awareness of ESL programs. Only 285 (35.7%) respondents indicated that they were aware of such programs. Of those 285 respondents, 231 (80.9%) were willing to say they think they provide the basic skills in English that these people need.

Question 7 of the telephone survey asked: Do you think the government should provide funding for literacy programs? Of 800 total respondents, 581 (72.6%) said yes, and only 187 (23.4%) said no. In light of the recent national and state elections in the USA, and the ensuing congressional debate on public funding for education, adult educators should be pleased to know that there appears to be a high level of support from among the general population for continuing public funding of adult basic education. Support for ESL programs, though not as high as for adult basic education, is still affirmed by 481 (60.2%) respondents.

**Conclusions.** Over the past two decades, it would appear that the conditions of adult basic education programs have not changed significantly. Students are still confronted by similar barriers to learning, child care and transportation. Instructors still speak of the need for improved training, materials, and facilities. Yet, in spite of these barriers, those stakeholders in public education, including policy makers and employers, generally feel that programs are needed and are doing good work with limited resources. What program administrators can learn from this study is the value of educating their communities about their programs. The more the public knows about the program, the more likely it is to support funding of these programs. And in light of current efforts to reauthorize adult education legislation in the USA, the results of this study support at the very least continued public funding of adult basic education.



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## Critical Adult Education and Identity In Postmodernity

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**Abstract:** This paper argues that the fragmentation of identity in postmodernity has profound consequences for critical forms of adult education.

### Introduction

From the outset, critical adult education has struggled to foster the capacity of individuals and groups to constitute their own identities through the tenuous process of communicative action. It has proceeded in its modernist political mission comfortable in the knowledge that domination can best be opposed by strong identities capable of reasonably confronting irrational forms of domination. Even when it has been careful not to impose specific forms of identity on adult learners, critical adult education has never doubted its belief that identity should be unified, coherent, persistent and self-derived.

The advent of postmodernity challenges these assumptions. Postmodernity destabilizes and fragments modern forms of subjectivity, undermines modernist conceptions of community and renders problematic modernist notions of agency. Reactions to these developments vary. Many thinkers influenced by the deconstructive orientation of post-structuralism celebrate the disintegration of the modern subject. They contend that the whole notion of a coherent, unified, and self-constituting subject, from the outset, has been a fictitious entity invented to further particular interests (those of the rationalist intellectual) and to suppress personal freedom, expressiveness, spontaneity, impulse, and desire. From this perspective, the project of critical adult education to constitute strong, unified identities always has been wrong-headed. The fragmentations of postmodernity offer new impetus for abandoning the Enlightenment project of emancipatory political action.

Other thinkers influenced by recent developments in sociology and Marxism, particularly those "late Marxists" interested in postmodernism as "the cultural logic of late capitalism," (Harvey, 1989; Jameson, 1991) believe that the disintegration of modern identities is part and parcel of a broad change in the way domination is effected in postmodern society. Where once domination was achieved hegemonically in capitalism by fostering identities compatible with the interests of the capitalist economic and political "system," now domination increasingly is achieved technologically using sophisticated instruments of surveillance, behavioral modification and cultural fragmentation. The cybernetic management of human action enables the system to bypass the difficult task of fostering psychic identities capable of serving its interests. In postmodernity, the struggle for identity evaporates as a front where we battle the destructiveness of the system. The long-standing project of critical adult education, to constitute identities capable of seeing through and resisting the hegemony of capitalism, is short-circuited with the development of cybernetic systems of action coordination.

Despite their differences, both the post-structuralist and late Marxist accounts of postmodernity have profound implications for critical adult education. At the very least, they suggest that we need to scrutinize the impulse of critical adult education to foster identity. We need to investigate the possibility that, in its efforts to create unified, persistent, coherent and self-constituting identities, critical adult education

marginalizes and excludes difference and denies and represses heterogeneity. We need to study whether the emergence of vast new technologies of social management render irrelevant an identity politics which assumes that human subjects still live in cohesive cultural contexts. If we decide, given these investigations, that there is indeed some remaining reason to persist with the project of critical adult education, we need to show how fostering strong identities remains an emancipatory act.

### Critical Adult Education, Identity and Modernity

Critical adult education's deep involvement with the project of modernity shows most blatantly in the way it adheres to a modern notion of identity. It is true that, in most instance, critical adult education rejects classic liberal notions of identity that posit lone and unencumbered individuals determining their own fates. For instance, in her critique of the "ideology of individualism" in adult education, Nel Keddie (1980) points out that:

adult education is oriented towards the same dominant or middle-class values that are reflected by the education system as a whole and are evidenced by its clientele. These values give particular social and political meanings to individualism which reflect the educational and cultural models of the elite...[T]hese models have often been passively accepted as models for the working class, even when its own social and political purposes have been very different from those of the elite. The failure to recognize this leads to a notion of the learner as an 'abstract and universal individual' rather than as 'a person situated in a historical, social and existential context. (p. 47)

Keddie's concern with the way mainstream forms of adult education abstract individuals from their social and political contexts and overestimate individual's power to shape their own life-histories is reiterated by Michael Collins (1988). In his criticism of one of adult education's principal notions, *self-directed learning*, Collins suggests that:

In reinforcing an individualistic approach, self-directed learning sustains a well entrenched taken-for-granted notion that "you can make it on your own efforts." Thus it militates against the creation of educational contexts that might foster critical dialogue, through people learning together, about social inequalities which contradict this taken-for-granted assumption. Far from empowering adult students, self-directed learning strategies steer them to a negotiated compromise with predominant interests which support social conformity. (p. 63)

Paulo Freire (Freire, 1987) is also skeptical of the isolated, self-derived individual. "I don't believe in self-liberation," he relates. "Liberation is a social act. Liberating education is a social process of illumination" (p. 109).

Just because they criticize individualism, however, does not mean that critical adult educators actually spurn a modern conception of identity. I would argue, in fact, that a central, underlying pillar of critical adult education is its effort to foster and sustain modern forms of identity constituted through what Jürgen Habermas describes as "communicative action." For Habermas (1987a), modern forms of identity constitution, both individual and collective, emerge with the developing rationalization of the lifeworld and the growing capacity of human agents to

coordinate action through communication. The fragility of contemporary personal and collective identities is due to the fact that identity formation in the modern age is no longer the product of a process of socialization that instills in people a constant and unchanging sense of place in the traditional community. Rather, it is now the product of a perpetually vulnerable and risk-filled process of communicative action. This does not mean, however, that, in Habermas's scheme, the individual or collective identity sheds its modernist characteristics of unity, cohesiveness, distinctness, or autonomy. "The ego-identity of the adult [and presumably, as well, of the mature collectivity] proves its worth in the ability to build up new identities from shattered or superseded identities, and to integrate them with old identities in such a way that the fabric of one's interactions is organized into the unity of a life history [or group history] that is both unmistakable and accountable" (Habermas, 1987, p. 98).

While the individual subject may not be able to generate her or his identity unhindered by concrete social relations, she or he is not without the capacity to be critical in an appropriately communicative context. Freire, for instance, is very clear that the critical pedagogical process fosters the capacity of the individual and group to constitute their identities within the context of "dialogical" action. Critical adult educator, Tom Lovett (1988), is also deeply aware of how individual autonomy is only possible within the context of a healthy collectivity. He observes the following of critical adult educators.

They are concerned to find new ways and means whereby individuals can be freed from existing constraints and afforded the possibility of individual growth and development through collective action. Theirs is an essentially optimistic view of human nature, one which stresses cooperation, fraternity, and egalitarianism. It is basically a call for people, oppressed people, to have more control over their own lives, to shape their world and to use modern resources and technology to do so. (p. 143)

The presumption, indeed the goal, of critical adult educators like Freire and Lovett is to foster communicative contexts where individuals and groups can constitute a coherent identity. They do not presume, of course, that a person's or community's identity remains static. Nonetheless, there is the prevailing belief among them and other critical adult educators that a central need for individuals and groups is to be able to integrate the changes and dislocations of contemporary life within the horizons of a thoroughly modern notion of identity.

### **Critical Adult Education, Identity and Postmodernity**

The Enlightenment belief that the good and just life can be achieved by autonomous identities capable of asserting their rational wills in the face of traditional and modern forms of domination runs aground on the shores of the postmodern epoch. Social observers of all stripes call into question the idea of unified, constant, and definitive identities suggesting that qualities like dispersion, transitoriness, and diffuseness are much more characteristic of contemporary social agents. They challenge the notion of self-constitution, point out how individuals and groups emerge in diverse and complex ways with no firm boundaries or fixed constitutions, and observe how no entity occupies a single position from which to construct a lasting and distinctive identity.



Of the many and diverse theoretical discourses which attempt to account for the dispersions of postmodern times, two, in particular, reveal the disturbing repercussions of postmodernity for critical adult education. The first of these, often referred to as "post-structuralism," views the subject as merely a consequence of language, an effect of an individual temporarily taking a position in discourse. In general, post-structuralists view the break-up of coherent forms of identity in a positive light because it provides new opportunity for the expression of forms of desire suppressed by rationalized personality and community structures. The deconstructive strategy of post-structuralism calls into question the way human subjects are identified. It challenges the legitimacy of any claim that it is possible to name a lasting and coherent identity.

While the advanced theoretical propositions of post-structuralists like Lacan, Derrida, Foucault or Lyotard fly high above the discursive contexts of everyday life, the general sentiment of their ideas seems to pervade our culture. This sentiment is palpable in the attitudes of a host of contemporary thinkers who raise doubts about the most recalcitrant essentialisms of identity. Whether it be in deconstructive writings of feminist theorists like Julia Kristeva (1981), Jane Flax (1990) or Donna Haraway (1991) who challenge the notion of what constitutes female and male identity; whether it be the anti-racist writings of bell hooks (1990) or Cornell West (1992) who challenge us to rethink what constitutes racial identity; or whether it be a host of writers from around the world like Edward Said (1978) or Salman Rushdie (1991) who challenge the notion of nationality in a time of massive migration and dislocation, post-structuralist thinkers call into question the very possibility of representing, speaking for, or fighting in favor of a unified and lasting identity, either individual or collective. Post-structuralist interpreters of postmodernity ask us to give up the presupposition that identities can be delineated, that subjects are unified, and that a stable perspective or position can be adopted. It asks that we stop seeking to bind together what is best left fragmented and spurious.

The sentiments of post-structuralism have dramatic implications for critical adult education. Moved by these sentiments, critical adult educators are beginning to question even very radical impulses in adult education to develop forms of identity capable of withstanding contemporary forms of oppression. In her seminal article, "Why Doesn't this Feel Empowering?," Elizabeth Ellsworth (1988) raises important questions about the ways "emancipating" educational initiatives, like those of Paulo Freire, actually foster the consolidation of forms of identity inimical to many people's interests. She observes how the intended product of these initiatives æ the rational, unified, stable, critically reflective individual æ actually diminishes the complexity and heterogeneity of contemporary people. According to Ellsworth and a growing host of postmodernist commentators, critical adult education can no longer take for granted that the constitution of modern identities is itself an emancipatory act. In postmodernity, critical adult education must learn to sustain its emancipatory intentions in a context of fragmentation and dispersion.

Post-structuralism is not the only collection of discourses on postmodernity with implications for critical adult education. Equally important are recent sociological and Marxist analyses of postmodernity as the "cultural logic of late capitalism." Perhaps one of the most sophisticated contributors to this discourse has been Jürgen Habermas (1987; 1987a). Drawing on him, it is possible to offer an account of how the identity politics of critical adult education may not be sufficient to resist forms of domination emerging in postmodernity.

Habermas observes how, in modern society, fluid forms of identity formation emerge in which individuals reproduce both their own identities and the identity of the collectives to which they belong through the relatively tenuous process of communicative action. A key plank in the struggle for social control in the 20th century has been the battle to shape identities. Because the economic and political system of capitalism has remained reliant on the reproductive capacities of integrated cultural contexts (in Habermas's terms, the lifeworld) to produce, amongst other things, personalities motivated to act in accordance with the needs of the economy and state, social agents who had most to gain from the growth of the system (historically, this has been the bourgeoisie) attempted to foster identities most suited to effective system functioning. The ideology maintained by the bourgeoisie was resisted by counter-hegemonic forces that aimed to foster identities constituted by unhindered communication.

In another context (Plumb, 1994), I have drawn on Habermas to suggest that postmodernity emerges at the historical juncture where the system rapidly gathers the capacity to reproduce itself free from its symbiotic relationship with the lifeworld. Whereas, in modernity, the system is forced to rely on the lifeworld's capacity for symbolic reproduction, in postmodernity, the system increasingly acquires the ability to motivate behaviors and to coordinate actions without appealing either to communicatively derived norms and values or to processes of discursive will formation. At the same time, as cultural commodification generates a plethora of signifiers that inundates the ability of individuals and groups to locate action in any coherent space and time, the system gains the capacity to coordinate action in a space and time extending far beyond the bounds of what is cognizable by lifeworld members.

All of this has great implications for identity formation, both individual and collective. For one thing, in postmodernity the success of the system does not hinge as greatly on the formation of identities consistent with its functional requirements. In fact, the formation of coherent identities becomes increasingly antithetical to the interests of a system attempting to get the most out of its newfound capacity to exploit complex gradients of nuance and difference. Armed with the cybernetic capacity to manage a vastly fragmented labor process and to detect and gratify complex psychic and somatic desires, the system no longer requires the people it contacts to possess coherent or lasting traits. Relentlessly, it extends its information seeking tendrils into the unwary bodies and minds of workers and consumers where it can immediately detect even the most minute differences in mood or desire and quickly utilize the most curious or changeable competencies. In so doing, the system decreasingly requires us to have identities. It now possesses other more pernicious and more direct ways of wheedling its way into our soft tissues than by manipulating processes of identity formation to create such useful, if rather contested, personalities like worker, consumer, and client or collectives like nation, profession, and family. Traditional and modern practices that enabled the constitution of integrated identities boil away in the maelstrom now raging through the lifeworld's weakened structures. Unified cultural contexts disappear as the basis for traditional forms of identity formation evaporate.

According to this narrative, postmodernity causes a decline in the capacity for identity formation with very negative effects. The destruction of the lifeworld leaves individuals and collectives with insufficient symbolic resources for constituting stable identities. Cut off from traditional storehouses of meaning and incapable of activating

competencies for communicative action, individuals and collectives in postmodernity are left with the ongoing task of patching together a series of ramshackle constructs of who and what they are out of the jumble of signifiers that flood their daily lives. In this context, neither individuals nor collectives autonomously can sustain unified, constant, and definitive identities.

Critical adult education emerged in a drastically different cultural and social context than it now inhabits. Today, domination is no longer secured through strong hegemonic processes. Accordingly, efforts to constitute identities autonomously capable of challenging the legitimacy of hegemony are insufficient to contest the vast cybernetically enhanced forces that dominate our society. Integrated systems of surveillance, technologies of behavior management and trends towards cultural fragmentation all obviate the "emancipatory" aspirations of critical adult education.

### Conclusion

The transformation of identity in postmodernity calls the traditional strategies of critical adult education into question. No longer is it sufficient to foster the emergence of a particular kind of identity sufficiently strong to overcome the inequitable norms of capitalism. Now, identity itself is in question and resistance to social inequities must emerge somehow from the fragmented and disparate voices of people in postmodernity. New processes of identity formation must be discovered that deal more dynamically with the heterogeneity of individual differences. The question that remains for critical adult education is whether identity is still possible and is still capable of resisting the imperatives of contemporary oppressive institutions. Critical adult education must investigate new ways that identity can still productively be mobilized in the fragmenting environment of postmodernity.

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## COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS AND MAINSTREAM EDUCATIONAL CHANGE: DYNAMICS AND DILEMMAS

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**Abstract:** Based on a decade of working with a Southeast Asian refugee organization, this analysis attempts to sort out useful working ideas and perspectives for professionals involved in change efforts at educational institutions through community-based organizations.

### Purpose

This paper explores dynamics and dilemmas involved in bringing about change in mainstream educational institutions through community-based organizations (CBO). There is an underlying assumption: Mainstream institutions involved with the education of nontraditional adults, particularly minorities, should have a working relationship with community-based organizations. This focus also assumes an approach to institutional change that differs from most academic literature concerned with educational reform efforts in the U.S.--including equity endeavors in adult education. Typically, change efforts rely on strategies *inside* institutions, such as staff development or curricular revision<sup>1</sup>. In contrast, the focus of this paper assumes that pressures from outside educational institutions are often needed to get those inside the institution to reorder their priorities for effective long-range change.

What this paper does not do is propose specific strategies to be implemented as recipes for change. Any particular educational and community context has its own mix of ingredients that needs to be considered in proposing specific strategies. Presented here are only ideas--working hypotheses that may have potential for others--generated by a case study: My involvement as a CBO board member and/or university liaison with Hmong leadership in their change efforts in a metropolitan school district, with the city's vocational-technical college, and at my own university.

This analysis, then, results from what I learned, utilized, questioned, revised, and acted upon during the past decade of working with community leadership concerning educational change for Southeast Asian-Americans. This experiential base of study developed through professional work as a professor--not only in a research role, but as a teacher, and particularly in a role of community service. Although universities typically dichotomize these faculty roles for accountability purposes, the roles are often in dynamic interaction with one another in the realities of professional practice.

### Theoretical Perspectives

This framework of working ideas, generated from and for action research, carries an epistemological assumption: Case studies need to be utilized differently than traditional social science research. As Lincoln and Guba point out, the terminology needs to shift from *generalizability* to *transferability*, assuming that conclusions will always be only working hypotheses.<sup>2</sup> This view of generalizing, as the sociologist Becker puts it, is "not a form of knowledge but a kind of work [and] such a view does not canonize any one form of generalization as the Right Way to do it."<sup>3</sup> This kind of study, as Donmoyer contends, "is simply to expand the range of interpretations available to the research consumer ... it can suggest possibilities but

can never dictate actions."<sup>4</sup> The complexity of social phenomena and processes--including the varied purposes and premises of the people involved--make it impossible to dictate what should be done in a particular place and time.

This framework has both similarities and differences with the premises associated with **participatory research**. Using *Voices of Change--Participatory Research in the United States and Canada*<sup>5</sup> as a base of comparison, two significant similarities become apparent. First, there is agreement that university academics join with community people for the purpose of fostering change--with the growth and empowerment of the community participants an important priority in the process. Although university faculty can be an organizing force with useful specialized knowledge, they are learners too, needing to know the community personally through face-to-face relationships in addition to learning about the community sociologically and culturally.

The second similarity concerns an epistemological premise: Knowledge is not of the technical *instrumental* type based on causal relationships and pitched toward control and prediction. Rather, knowledge is viewed as: 1) *interactive*, derived from sharing and dialogue as feeling human beings; and 2) *critical*, derived from reflection and action concerning transforming one's realities in order to solve problems of inequity. In this epistemology, the professional practices of teaching, service, and research are not only integrated rather than separated from one another; these practices are inevitably involved in situations marked by ambiguity, contradiction, and existential conflict.

On the other hand, there seem to be two key differences worth noting between typical assumptions of participatory research and those underlying my experiential base. First, there is a difference with those involved in participatory research who emphasize reflection and action involving large-scale societal change--the kind of change seen as needed to counteract the disenfranchising structural aspects of modern society. Also emphasized by many with this structural perspective are the links of participatory research to social movements. Although there is not an inherent dichotomy between this larger societal focus and my focus on educational change efforts, there are distinctions that should not be overlooked.

My experiential base of change efforts reflects a certain faith in mainstream education, albeit less than most in mainstream educational institutions. Involved also in my base is an assumption of working *with* mainstream institutions, rather than an approach primarily of confrontation from a base of cultural or class conflict. This difference in approaches to change reflects influence on the process by the Hmong community--as well as influence of my own professional context as an education professor working with educational institutions.

This professional context leads to the second difference with others in participatory research, centering on the relationship between the university faculty liaison and the community participants. This relationship inevitably is influenced by the professional roles the academic has in particular contexts. For example, if the work setting is the university itself, the faculty member cannot escape the reality that he or she carries an image as an *insider*. Or if the faculty member is working professionally with a school system or a vocational-technical institution, this role may run into conflict with his/her role with a community group that is working toward change in that system or institution.

Not only does the context influence the role expectations of the academic (by others as well as by him/herself), but such contextual influences may in turn affect

the involvement of the community participants. For example, emphasized in participatory research is the importance of community people carrying out the investigation themselves--starting with their problem and ending with their solution. But for a faculty member with two liaison roles, to emphasize that community people should carry out the investigation themselves is easier to say than do. In the realities of institutional contexts, educators are involved with their own problems and their own solutions, and these may be in conflict with those of community groups.

If university faculty are working with educational institutions, they need to have an *interactive* as well as a *specialized* knowledge base working with educators, and they even may have a *critical* base working toward change. Such bases may even facilitate collaboration between the educational institution and a community group. However, these bases with professional networks also have the potential for conflict and for the university liaison to be caught between the educational institution and the community. And if the liaison is involved in change within his/her own university, the dilemmas may be even more intense.

### Working Hypotheses

There are two categories of working ideas that I propose based on my experiences of the past decade. The first deals with the relationship between the educational institution and the community-based organization. The second centers on the role of the liaison mediating between the mainstream institution and the minority community. These two categories, of course, inevitably overlap with one another in the realities of practice.

First, concerning the relationship issue: A check and balance should be promoted between the educational institution and the community-based organization. This means that there should be a realistic parity in which power of one can be checked in some way by the other. In saying this, I realize that frequently the community group is underpowered and needs reinforcements to obtain parity.

This check and balance relationship is important because effective collaboration needs to develop out of a pragmatic integration between **independence and cooperation**. Collaboration depending on genuine cooperation is created through an *interactive* knowledge base that is built by sharing goals and processes through face-to-face dialogue. Collaboration without this base of human interaction has no cooperative dimension, but only a contractual one built out of self-interest and negotiation.

However, face-to-face interaction without independence on the part of both the educational institution and community organization can lead to either paternalism or romanticism. Without CBO independence, the community may be co-opted with false participation, one in which participants are recognized (even given status), but without any real decision-making. The result for them is an absence of empowerment in a paternalistic process. On the other hand, the educational institution needs a certain independence from the CBO. It is vulnerable to succumbing to unrealistic expectations (of itself as well as from the outside), even vulnerable to losing its integrity in trying to placate community pressures.

Where there is independence, there is the potential for conflict, and this should be viewed as an inevitable dimension of a working relationship. Conflict and negotiation can be a dynamic element in the relationship; however, in my experience, it is generally better to keep this in the background as a potential dimension rather

than in the foreground as a starting point. The Hmong leadership with whom I have worked taught me the power of community cooperation with mainstream institutions--but always without sacrificing their independence and potential use of conflict.

The second category of working hypotheses is focused on the role of the liaison from the educational institution working with the community organization. The liaison is a connecting bridge, needing to be anchored on both sides with *interactive* as well as *specialized* knowledge. And the liaison needs to be aware of the tensions that such a bridge encounters: **dilemmas**, their kind and weight depending upon the particular context.

There are two prerequisites to being an effective liaison. One, the educator must be professionally respected inside the educational institution and personally respected by those in the community organization. Two, he or she must have a long-range commitment to change. Without genuine respect from both sides, the liaison will be shaky at the foundation, with any hope for progress jeopardized from the beginning. Without commitment characterized by a sense of longevity, progress will be halted sooner or later by a lack of persistence.

Although respect and commitment are prerequisites, they will not prevent the dilemmas facing a liaison who is caught in conflicting roles. The role conflict is most intense when a liaison is caught between his/her own institution and the CBO, exacerbated the more the educator is vulnerable to pressures inside the educational bureaucracy.

For example, as a university liaison working with two liaisons from the city's school system and with the Southeast Asian leadership, I could be much more directly involved with the community organization in pressuring the school system than the two liaisons (including a Southeast Asian) from that system. Both of them were not only entangled within the administrative power hierarchy of their own institution; the CBO leadership perceived them as not being independent enough from that bureaucracy. Although professionally caught, they were helpful in informing me and the CBO leadership of the institutional forces that we had to deal with in order to have an impact on the educational issues at hand.

Another comparative example from my experience involved two liaisons from the vocational-technical institution with which the CBO leadership were attempting to develop a community-based bilingual literacy program. One of the liaisons, a mainstream board member of the CBO along with me, was an English as a second language (ESL) teacher in the voc-tech's literacy program, a program having an English-only rather than a bilingual philosophy. He became visibly caught between two literacy philosophies, the tension exacerbated more by his role as a union leader protecting faculty priorities. The other liaison, a Southeast Asian, became caught between his role as the voc-tech's adviser to Southeast Asian students and his role as president of the CBO board.

In this context, I, as a university liaison not caught in such role conflicts, could take the lead for the CBO in working with the voc-tech administration to establish the bilingual community-based program. Therefore, I could take the heat for the CBO in the conflict with the ESL teacher and his staff--thus protecting the Hmong board members as well as Southeast Asian voc-tech adviser/CBO president. Although reaching the CBO goal of a community-based literacy program, I felt two dilemmas of my own: 1) any future professional relationship with the ESL teacher and his program faculty was jeopardized, and 2) the lead I took representing the CBO



diminished the involvement of the Southeast Asian leadership and their empowerment in the process.<sup>6</sup>

These past experiences contrast with my current experience of working with the CBO leadership in applying community pressure to my own university in order to bring about better institutional support of Southeast Asian-American students. Now I am open to criticism inside my own institution, whether from administrators above me in the hierarchy or from staff below me. More importantly, I have the vulnerability of taking empowerment from the community participants in the process while depending upon my knowledge of my own institution. Such dilemmas, arising from competing priorities, is part of the territory of ambiguity for a liaison involved in educational change with and for a minority community in his/her own institution.

### Concluding Questions

This paper is an analysis in search of dialogue. Dialogue with others, who have differences as well as similarities in their experiential bases, is needed to deepen the exploration around the following kinds of questions.

To what extent should the approach toward change be consistent with the cultural assumptions of the community group that is involved? For example, a model of cooperation with mainstream institutions from a base of independence fits the culture of the Hmong? But is this approach appropriate for other minority communities? And if cultural assumptions are emphasized, could not a community group become limited by their own traditions and not be adaptive enough in modifying their approach to change.

How does the analysis of this paper, including its underlying assumptions, compare to other perspectives in the literature of community adult education and community action? For example, Brookfield draws upon a contrast (along with similarities) between Moses Coady in Nova Scotia in the 1920s and 1930s and Paulo Freire in Brazil in the 1950s and 1960s: the first a reformist pragmatically working within that system, the second a radical viewing that social structure as not amenable to reform.<sup>7</sup> To what extent should the context dictate the approach to change, even assumptions? Or are change efforts doomed to co-optation without an ideology (from right or left) to drive them?

To what extent should the faculty subculture of an educational institution be considered in developing an approach to educational change? For example, Metz concludes from her sociological research in schools that the macro culture, the occupational culture, and the micro culture of the institution are interactive, complex circles of causation affecting the faculty subculture which is "pivotal in determining final effects."<sup>8</sup> To what extent can a community-based organization realistically affect such a faculty subculture?

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1 For example, see eds. Elizabeth Hayes and Scipio Colin, *Confronting Racism and Sexism* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994); although emphasized at the end of the book is the need for other strategies such as collaboration with community groups

2 Yvonna Lincoln and Egon Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1985).

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<sup>3</sup> Howard Becker, "Generalizability and the Single-Case Study," *Qualitative Inquiry in Education*, eds. Elliot Eisner and Alan Peskin (New York: Teachers College Press, 1990), 235.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Donmoyer, "Generalizability and the Single-Case Study," *Qualitative Inquiry in Education*, 182, 194.

<sup>5</sup> Eds. Peter Park et al., *Voices of Change-Participatory Research in the United States and Canada* (Toronto: OISE Press, 1993). It should be noted that there are differences among the authors in the book.

<sup>6</sup> For a more comprehensive analysis of this change effort, see Ronald Podeschi, "Teaching Their Own: Minority Challenges to Mainstream Institutions," Eds. Jovita Ross, Larry Martin, and Diane Briscoe, *Serving Culturally Diverse Populations*, New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, no. 48 (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1990).

<sup>7</sup> Stephen Brookfield, *Adult Learners, Adult Education and the Community* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1984), 110.

<sup>8</sup> Mary Metz, *Different by Design* (New York: Rutledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), 221.

## **Learning and motivation associated with changes in the lives and practices of architects: A study in support of a natural learning model for professionals.**

Michael A. Price, MEd and Evelyn Knowles, PhD

Findings from a study of change among architects support the broader application of Fox's model of learning and changing. This model describes professionals' natural learning process within the context of change and provides a framework for research in learning, motivation, and change.

Change is fundamental to the purposes and practices of continuing professional education. It is the ultimate measure of program success and, for some, the philosophical basis for practice (Cervero, 1988). Yet, few studies have been conducted or models proposed to explain in a comprehensive manner the nature of professionals' learning in the context of change. The CPE literature abounds with studies attempting to find change as a result of educational interventions. Often these studies find no change even among well conceived programs (Davis et al, 1992; Lloyd and Abrahamson, 1979; Sibley et al, 1982). Nowlen (1988) has suggested a model of practice that takes into account personal and social factors in addition to the elements of formal continuing education. Other valuable insights have been offered by Cervero (1988), Houle (1980), Knowles (1980), and Knox (1986) but none represent a comprehensive model of change. In the absence of such a model, practitioners are left to practice what Long (1983) refers to as the "art" of program planning, while researchers lack direction for fruitful investigation.

A model describing the interrelationships of change, motivation for change, and learning among physicians has been proposed by Fox (Fox, 1991; Harvey and Fox, 1994). It is primarily based on the results of a qualitative study of changing and learning in the lives of 375 physicians in the U.S. and Canada (Fox, Mazmanian, and Putnam, 1989). Direct links were found between types of learning experiences, changes in practice, and the motivations or forces for change. Although the physician study and Fox's model have significantly influenced continuing medical education, references to this study in the general adult education literature are rare. To explore the possible application of Fox's model to other professional groups, the Research Center for Continuing Professional and Higher Education located at the University of Oklahoma recently conducted a similar study with a group of professional architects. The purpose of this paper is to report relevant findings of this study and to give a wider audience to Fox's model.

### **Fox's Model of Learning and Changing**

The first element of Fox's model is the identification of the force or forces propelling the professional to make a change. The model categorizes forces as social/regulatory, professional, or personal. Social/regulatory forces are those

pressures placed upon the professional by family, friends, colleagues, and society. Professional forces arise from the professionals' desire to be competent and their expectations as to what inclusion in the profession involves. Personal forces come from within and are driven by the emotional needs of the individual, such as well-being or curiosity. These forces overlap to form a continuum from external social forces to internal personal forces (Harvey and Fox, 1994).

Once the change process is initiated, the professional focuses upon the change and begins to develop a mental image of the outcome of changing. Clear images at this stage appear to predict more direct and efficient learning and change (Davis and Fox, 1994). Professionals use images of change to internally assess the abilities they may need to make changes. The discrepancy between what the professional knows and perceives to need predicts whether they will engage in learning and, if so, the manner in which they will learn.

In most cases, professionals engage in learning activities during the process of changing (Fox et al, 1989). Fox describes these activities as the professionals' self directed curricula (Fox, 1991). His research indicates that professionals use informal and formal learning to further assess their competence, acquire competence, and/or implement competence in practice. They use three different types of learning resources, often in tandem, to accomplish these goals. They read, consult with colleagues and other human helpers, and occasionally attend formal programs. Formal programs, while helpful, are rarely the only resource used to make a change and only account for about ten to twenty percent of total learning.

The final element in the model is the nature of the change itself. Changes are categorized as accommodations, adjustments, or redirections (Davis and Fox, 1994; Fox, 1991). Accommodations are small changes that typically require little effort to achieve. Adjustments are small to medium changes, usually incremental, that typically require more effort and time to achieve. Redirections are major changes affecting many different aspects of a professional's life and practice. Typically, changes require long term and complex efforts to achieve.

The following propositions from the physician study (Fox et al, 1989) illustrate the potential of this model to inform CPE planners:

- Professional forces are more likely to lead to new learning activities.
- Learning is associated with most incremental adjustment changes.
- The clearer the understanding of the force for change and its consequences, the more likely learning will be directed toward specific problems rather than broad conceptual understanding.
- Personal forces are more likely to lead to new learning oriented toward conceptual understanding and to structural redirection change.
- Social forces are less likely than other forces to lead to learning, but more likely to lead to smaller changes that are perceived negatively.
- Accommodations are more likely to be associated with negative feelings.
- Accommodations are less likely than incremental adjustments or structural redirections to be associated with learning.

### The Architect Study

Architects were considered good subjects for a follow-up to the physician study because of their interesting similarities and differences to physicians. Both



architects and physicians are products of rigorous educational preparation and belong to major regulated professions. On the other hand, architecture has a very poorly developed continuing education infrastructure while medicine has the most developed. An electronic search of major journals from both professions revealed that continuing education articles concerning physicians outnumbered those for architects by a ratio of 100 to 1. Thus, similarities in patterns of learning and change among architects and physicians would lend support to a formative theory of learning in the professions based on the propositions from the physician study and Fox's model.

The design of the architect study closely parallels that of the physician study. Both studies were based upon a naturalistic perspective and relied primarily on retrospective data collected through structured interviews (Fox et al, 1989). The constant comparative method as described by Glasser and Strauss (1967) was used to analyze the data. The intent of this methodology is to discover and test theories as they emerge during the categorization of the data. Theories are initially substantive in nature but may be developed into formative theory by applying them to more diverse groups of subjects. Thus the architects study began with categories and propositions developed in the physician study.

The American Institute of Architects assisted in the study by identifying volunteers to conduct interviews and by providing each interviewer with a list of randomly selected AIA members residing within the same or adjacent zip codes as those of the interviewers. Two of the researchers and twelve trained volunteers conducted the interviews. The Research Center supplied each volunteer with a guidebook and video tape explaining the study and the interview protocol. The protocol consisted of the following questions:

- What changes have you made or have occurred in your life or your practice within the past year?
- What caused this change to occur?
- Did you seek information or attempt to develop your skills in order to make this change or because of this change?
- Did formal continuing education or other formal education play any role in learning associated with this change?
- Related to this change, how much time was spent in learning by formal instruction?

With the permission of the subjects, the interviewers made audio recordings of every interview. The researchers used these recordings to code and analyze the content of the interviews. A total of eighty-nine interviews were conducted; although, eight were not considered for analysis due to either poor audio quality or the failure of the interviewer to follow the protocol.

### Findings and Analysis

A total of 231 changes were reported in the eighty-one usable interviews. Ten change stories were removed from the analysis because they lacked sufficient information or were internally inconsistent. Ninety-five percent of the subjects were men; seventy-nine percent were in the mid or late stage of their career; and, nearly three-fourths were either principles of firms or senior associates. These statistics may not represent all architects but are consistent with the general membership of the AIA (The American..., 1994; Price et al, 1991).

The percent of changes within each change category closely mirrored those in the physician study. Sixty-five percent of changes were classified as moderate adjustments, twenty-two percent as redirections and twelve percent as accommodations. Feelings expressed about changes varied according to level of change. Negative feelings were most likely to be expressed about accommodations, while the greatest positive feelings were expressed for redirections.

Areas of practice or life in which change occurs is another category of interest. Seventy-three percent of changes involved issues of managing a practice. This likely reflects the demographics of the sample group, the majority of whom were at the management level. It also indicates the importance of the profession as a force for change. Personal changes, such as a career change or health problems accounted for fourteen percent of changes, and clients and projects, such as adjusting to a new building type or client, accounted for eleven percent. Changes in the areas of general practice, community and professional roles, and family issues were also evident but in much smaller numbers.

Professional motivations were associated with the greatest number of change cases. Purely professional forces accounted for forty-seven percent of changes, professional/personal twenty-nine percent, and professional/social sixteen percent. Professional forces were most associated with accommodations and adjustments, while personal forces were most associated with redirections. As in the physician study, the desire for professional competence, such as to be a better manager or to better understand their clients' needs, was the major force for change. Other similar reasons for change included curiosity, well-being, family and social pressures, community service, and professionalism.

An interesting difference between the physicians and architects was the degree to which the economy was reported as the reason for change. In approximately one-fourth of all changes the economy was the trigger or force for change. The physician study rarely mentioned the economy as a factor except in terms of increasing incomes for personal well-being. Some architects also made positive changes of this nature, but most were confronted with unwanted new roles due to downsizing, relocation or other job changes. Economic boom and bust cycles are common in the profession, and either may serve as a force for change. The researchers placed most of the economy forces into the category of social/professional forces. Feelings toward these forces tended to be neutral or slightly negative.

Social/regulatory factors were less noted than in the physician study. This may reflect the differences in recertification regulations between the two professions. Few architects are required to participate in continuing education or testing for recertification. Physicians may also be subject to greater regulations for membership in speciality societies and for hospital privileges.

An entirely new category, referred to as "we changes", emerged from the architect study. In one-third of the change stories subjects had difficulty in discussing their specific change separately from other members in their firms or from the firm itself. Many of the subjects used phrases, such as "we changed our marketing approach" or "the firm studied this issue". Architecture places a great emphasis on firms and teams. Architects are also conditioned to work in team settings while in architecture school where the studio method is the principle form of teaching. "We changes" appear to be an outcome of the professional culture, and they pose some very interesting questions for further research.

As in the physician study, most change cases involved new learning directed toward accomplishing the change. Adjustment changes were the most likely to involve learning - ninety percent in the architect study and eighty-eight percent in the physician study. The least amount of learning was associated with accommodations.

Informal learning activities accounted for eighty percent of all learning activities reported by the architects. This too was similar to the findings of the physician study. The most often cited informal resources were coworkers and mentors within their firms and close associates of their firms, such as consultants and clients were also used as primary resources. Material resources used by the architects were generally related to technical aspects of problems, such as code books and manuals. Field observations of buildings were also mentioned as popular learning resources. These findings are consistent with previous studies of the ways architects access information (Burnette, 1979; Price, et al., 1991).

Formal learning resources were also used by the architects but to less of an extent than the physicians. Many formal learning activities were conducted in the firms. These activities varied greatly from simple "brown bag" presentations at lunch time to intensive training sessions lasting several days or weeks. Formal learning activities were most likely to occur in relation to accommodation changes, and least likely in relation to adjustments. Architects often used a variety resources and learning methods to assist in the changes. The choice of resources and methods was generally controlled by the architect.

### Conclusions

Overall the researchers found remarkable congruence with the findings of the physician study. Architects, like physicians, make many changes in their practices and lives, and, in most cases, they engage in learning to facilitate these changes. Architects also use multiple learning resources that are most often informal in nature. Categories related to degree of change, forces for change, and the nature of learning which had emerged in the physician study were also evident among the architects, and relationships between the categories were also consistent. Based on these findings, the researchers conclude that the propositions and concepts offered by Fox, Mazmanian, and Putnam and the natural learning model proposed by Fox may be applicable to a broader spectrum of professionals and should be further investigated.

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## Literacy and Postmodernism: A Deconstruction Model for Analysis of Our Myths, Our Past, and Our Profession

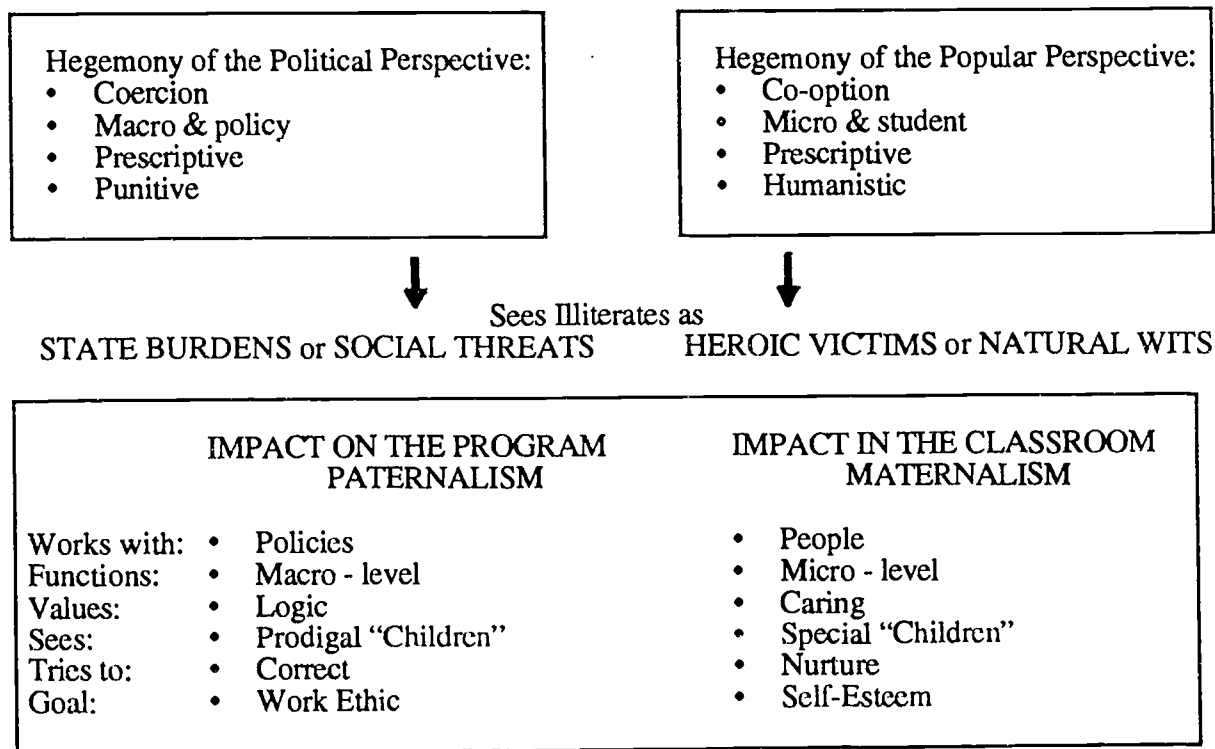
B. Allan Quigley

**ABSTRACT:** Today we see a decline in confidence towards past authority that claimed "illiteracy can be eradicated." The field is adrift--uncertain of what to believe, more powerless than ever. Postmodernism calls for re-interpretation of our past. This model re-interprets our past through two Perspectives.

**LITERACY AND POSTMODERNITY:** Anyone attending a state or national literacy conference in the last decade will probably have witnessed a familiar spectacle: A politician's speech followed by the moving testimony of a new literate adult. Here is the field's "dramatic formula" for leveraging political funding and sustaining its myths. Yet, despite the National Adult Literacy Survey (1993) reporting over 90 million adults affected by low literacy, political policy is now silent on the subject, as is the media. Fewer are listening. The field is adrift. As Giroux puts it: "We have entered an age that is marked by a crisis of power, patriarchy, authority, identity and ethics" (1992, p. 39). When our "grand narratives" fail, the field "fails." It questions its political authority, its popular identity, its future. How these myths have evolved and for what purposes; how the ethical and identity issues of today are a legacy of our past, were the foci of this study.

It is posited that the multiple myths which have been perpetuated for over a century, can be interpreted as follows:

### DECONSTRUCTION MODEL FOR RE-INTERPRETING LITERACY



**METHODS:** Postmodernists argue for "recourse to fictional, aesthetic, and literary modes" (Chambers, 1990) to reinterpret our world. The above model posits that the illiterate has been presented in the Popular Perspective as a romanticized "Heroic Victim"; only infrequently as a "Natural Wit," and consistently in a "maternalistic" view--carried into the classroom. The Political Perspective sees illiteracy (not "illiterates") as a paternalistic consensus-building issue linked consistently with crises used for the policy regulation of subordinates (Finch, 1984). For the Popular Perspective, an heuristic analysis of article content was conducted on all magazines from the Readers Periodical Index and The New York Times Index between 1980-1993. Forty novels, dramas, poems and short stories portraying illiterates from the 18th, 19th, 20th century and recent films were analyzed. For the Political Perspective, over 200 policy papers, advisory documents, and legislation were analyzed. Across the research, the questions were: 1) "How are illiterates/illiteracy portrayed?" 2) "What patterns of purpose arise?" 3) "How does this affect the field?"

**THE POPULAR PERSPECTIVE:** On December 12, 1984, at the New York Public Library, The New York Times (Dougherty, 1984, p. 29) reported the media had chosen illiteracy as their "cause." The Advertising Council announced it would aim "to get 250,000 volunteers in the first year" (p. 29) using this first television ad in its new "full-court press," (p. 29):

The single TV commercial, which will be available in 30 second and 60-second lengths, highlights the problem by showing a young father trying unsuccessfully to read a bedtime story to his daughter. As he stumbles and stutters with the words, the voice of Maureen Stapleton explains that the man is functionally illiterate, one of 27 million Americans who are so handicapped.

Adding: "The only degree you need is a degree of caring" (p. 29), this first perspective has historically reinforced two Popular images: The Heroic Victim and the Natural Wit. The Heroic Victim has been created in four consistent stereotypes. First, the Simple American Worker. Saying the 1980 campaign borrows "from other writers" (p. 29), the above scene is traced to Dickens' Great Expectations. Pip is sitting in his chimney corner practicing his writing. He passes a note to his blacksmith uncle, Joe Gargery:

I delivered this written communication (slate and all) with my own hand, and Joe received it, as a miracle of erudition.

'I say, Pip, old chap!' cried Joe, opening his blue eyes wide 'What a scholar you are! Ain't you?'

'I should like to be,' said I, glancing at the slate as he held it; with a misgiving that the writing was rather hilly.

'Why, here's a J,' said Joe, 'and a O equal to anythink! Here's a J and a O, Pip, and J-O, Joe.'

The Heroic Victim as Simple Illiterate Worker emerges repeatedly in American popular literature/media, as in Esquire (1984):

The man is fifty-five years old. He is trying to learn how to read. He is a large man, balding and wearing thick glasses; he bears a resemblance to Ernest Borgnine. His plumber's work clothes--denim overalls, a flannel shirt--are still on. Today, as he does twice a week, he has driven straight from work to Mrs. Lord's house. His hands are dirty from his day's labor; as he points to the

words on the spelling list you can see that he has not had time to stop and clean up. . . The next word on the list is down.

"Down," the man says with confidence in his voice.

"That's right," Mrs. Lord says. "Very good." (102, p. 10)

In films, novels, the media, (and state conferences), this stereotype is subject to a curious pattern of "humbling." Prideful illiterate males are typically humbled by circumstance, then taught to be literate, resulting in a sudden sensitivity and promised productivity: forced Darwinian evolution. The second stereotype is the Simple Illiterate Immigrant--never "prideful," always humble. In Buck's The Good Earth (1932) Wang Lung, farmer, must admit to the grain merchant he cannot write his name: "Let it be what you will, for I am too ignorant to know my own name." (p. 168). In novels, such as Out of this Furnace (Bell, 1976), characters like Mike Dobrejczak attend Americanization classes but become caricatures of "real Americans." Mike leaves the program asking, "What General Braddock and George Washington were doing in these Pennsylvania backwoods was never made clear" (p. 120).

In recent media, stereotypes such as seven year old immigrant Maria now attends an American school "Where each day the teacher called on students to stand and read. Trembling, Maria would rise, hoping the words on the page might magically make sense. But they never did" (p. 131). This consistent stereotype struggles, overcomes some economic hardship, but remains at a safe cultural distance. The third stereotype is the Simple African American Illiterate, as seen in Walker's The Color Purple. Unlike the Simple Worker or Simple Immigrant, this stereotype is rarely allowed to aspire to the American Dream. As this novel's brave heroine comes to realize: "The little I knew about my own self wouldn't have filled a thimble" (1982, p. 138). The fourth is The Simple Southerner, as in Agee and Walker's Let Us Now Praise Famous Men (1966). The latter two come together with Bertha, a "stocky 63-year old black woman" whose parents were sharecroppers:

Bertha's father took her to school, often carrying her piggy-back on the three-mile trek. When she got older, she would take time off to help in the fields. By the time she would return to school, she'd have forgotten her lessons and would need to start all over again. Before Bertha reached her teens, she had quit school for good to work with their parents. (Jordan, 1987, p. 55)

Although the modern media chastised itself four years after beginning its modern campaign for reports which "Appeared to be single shots--stories that editors ordered up one day, [and] reporters produced soon after" (Gersh, 1988, p. 22), the media was simply carrying on a Popular Perspective tradition of trivializing illiterates, objectifying characteristics which "threaten," and reproducing dominant culture--as have our annual state conferences.

The "counter-stereotypes" in this Perspective arise in the Natural Wit, found especially in the late 19th century. As with Huckleberry Finn, this stereotype has "naturally" evolved with uncommon common sense. The Natural Wit is typically a statement used to expose pomposity and injustice. These are the "alter egos" of the Heroic Victims. In Shaw's 1913 play, Pygmalion, Mr. Doolittle is the alter ego of the Simple Illiterate Worker, glorifying the "Undeserving poor." Maugham's The Verger tells of Albert Foreman who cared for St. Peter's church. When the vicar suddenly fires him because he is illiterate, Foreman sees a need for a tobacco shop along the very street he returns home on and, "In the course of ten years he had acquired no less than ten shops and was making money hand over fist" (p. 46). When asked,

"What would you be now if you had been able to?" he answers: "I'd be verger of St. Peter's, Neville Square." (p. 47). The comic character of Rosten's H\*Y\*M\*A\*N K\*A\*P\*L\*A\*N stories is an example of the Simple Immigrant alter ego. Figures in works by Ellison and other African American authors reverse the Simple African image, as do those in such as Tennessee Williams on the Simple Southerner.

Significantly, the Natural Wit appears less often than the Heroic Victim during this century and rarely in the recent media. A rare example of this is John Corcoran: "A Success as a Teacher and Builder John Corcoran had a humiliating Secret: He Couldn't Read or Write" (Smith, 1988). Corcoran graduated from college "became a respected social studies teacher," turned a \$2,500 investment into a house building business and ended up at age 40 a multi-millionaire owning a villa "with a slam-dunk view of the Pacific." Yet, he was "a total illiterate" (Smith, 1988, p. 199).

Heroic Victims are successfully helped onto the bottom rung of the Ladder of Schooling with missionary zeal. Natural Wits are used to protect dominant values while laughing at the Schooling Ladder.

**THE POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE** sees "literacy" at the macro level in association with policy and administration. A more paternalistic, punitive view is held--the virtual opposite of the Popular. In 1880, illiteracy was portrayed as "This immense evil, our weakness and our disgrace, [which] extends among our native population as well as among those of foreign birth" (Leigh, pp. 802-803). From a rallying cry against sin, to today, illiteracy has been used to build consensus and regulate subordinate groups. During slavery, a legacy of plantation/state policies arose to deny literacy and regulate a race. Then, literacy was learned or taught at the risk of hanging or mutilation. The regulation of immigrants in the 1880's accelerated to the '20's until, as the YMCA stated, we must "assimilate, develop, train and make good citizens out of them, [or] they are certain to make ignorant, suspicious and un-American citizens out of us. Unless we Americanize them they will foreignize us" (Carlson, p. 447). The upshot of requiring citizens to write before they could vote in many states was to deny the vote to women and other groups since working men typically had access to Americanization classes (Cook, 1977). As recently as the 1980's, Justice Rehnquist was accused of having demanded (Black) voters to demonstrate their writing ability at Phoenix voting polls.

The 1930's saw the rise of the CCC movement where illiterates were tutored in camps built and watched by the military. This was the first regulation of the unemployed with literacy as policy (Quigley, 1990). The 1940's saw illiteracy as a seed bed for Nazism. Russell of Teachers College, observed that America was at risk: "It is important that we do not follow the Nazis . . . They have few illiterates; they have trained their bodies to be hard; they work with skill; they have apparently adjusted themselves to technology" (p. 82). In 1940, U.S. Commissioner Studebaker said Nazism "has a special meaning for educators in this democracy--one of the 'earth's last best hopes.'" He demanded: "The eradication of illiteracy...Now!" (cited in Quigley, 1990). During the '50's, illiteracy was presented as a seedbed for Communism (Cook, 1977). Fear of such subversion/unpatriotism echoes into today's media.

One of the periods of social policy exception occurred in the 1930's with Ambrose Caliver, an African American appointed Specialist in Education for Negroes with the U.S. Office of Education during the 1930's-'40's. Caliver began by pointing out that: "Although illiteracy [programs] in the States maintaining separate schools



was four times greater among Negroes, the number of emergency teachers employed to teach illiterates was approximately the same as for whites" (cited in Quigley, 1990). Caliver designed the now forgotten Magna Carta of Negro Education, distributed during 1934-35. This governmentally endorsed document asserted the rights of Blacks to an equal education. Unfortunately, Caliver acquired normative goals. After WW II, the new crisis was the technology race and he was silent on Black rights: "Illiteracy is one of the most important problems in the mobilization of our manpower to meet the present emergency" (cited in Quigley, 1990).

**PERSPECTIVE SEPARATION:** The rise of legislation through the mid-1960's and the rise in funding and interest was actually the rise of ABE, not "literacy." The language changed after defeat of the proposed "Literacy Bill" of 1962 and '63 (Cook, 1977). "Literacy," as in previous crises, was eclipsed by the Political Perspective. From the 1960's to today, a new language has separated the "older" Popular Perspective from the more technical Political Perspective of ABE. The National Development Act of 1962 set in motion a thrust where: "Usually a survey was made of the industrial needs of the area, a curriculum was designed, and an educational program was set up" (Cook, 1977, p. 83). To today, "literacy" in policy settings has been called "Adult Education" or ABE/GED. The recent Popular Perspective sentiment aroused by the Barbara Bush campaign remained separate from the George Bush Political Perspective. The 1991 National Literacy Act, which Barbara Bush fostered, sets policies for job development first and foremost. It defines literacy as "An individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English, and to compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job and in society, [italics added] to achieve one's goals, and develop one's knowledge and potential" (cited in Quigley, 1991).

Through the 1990's, illiteracy has been linked to human capital production and patriotism but, increasingly, with crime, as in Edward Kennedy's and Warren Burger's 1987 article in the New York Times: "Illiteracy costs the nation heavily in reduced international competitiveness . . . increased poverty . . . lesser skills in the armed forces . . . lost productivity and dead-end lives of crime and drugs" (p.27). It is suggested the next theme for regulation will be the concern with the rise of minority demographics and immigrants--legal and illegal--before America's "unhappy rendezvous with demographic destiny" (see Chisman, 1989).

**IN CONCLUSION:** The field of literacy has developed itself by promoting the Popular Perspective to the Political. State and national literacy conferences place new literate adults on stage to give testimony alongside the politicians we want to influence. A microcosm of this is seen in literacy programs where the more paternalistic (usually male) administrator functions with "logical" policy and a Political Perspective; the (usually female) teacher acts out of a maternalistic, "sentimental" Popular Perspective. By being completely caught up in these two Perspectives, the field remains a minor actor in this historic drama of myths and meta-narratives. We are today a victim--playing lip service to both Perspectives, fearing to raise our voice against either.

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## The Individual in the Community: Horace Kallen, Cultural Pluralism and the Making of the Early Adult Education Movement

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**Abstract:** This paper examines the work of Horace Kallen in light of his interest in individualism, the community, and the meaning of cultural pluralism. This work is then discussed in terms of its relationship to early adult education.

### INTRODUCTION

In recent years all levels of education have seen a surge of interest in multicultural education and in education for diversity. In adult education, the debate has swirled around questions relating to the very meaning of the terms, as well as the integration of individual and communal ideological frameworks. Articles on these topics often refer to the works of Horace Kallen and his early work on cultural pluralism, but they fail to comprehensively analyze his work or to place him within an historical context.

Kallen (1882-1974) is perhaps best-known within the field of adult education for his 1962 work, Philosophical Issues in Adult Education. In this work Kallen linked his views of adult education to his vision of the American Idea, taking into account his repudiation of the melting pot and his belief that effective and participating citizens had to be aware of their own cultural backgrounds and group histories. Kallen portrayed adult education as the quintessential cultural institution of American democratic thought. While this work was influential in its time, this paper will explore Kallen's earlier work, where he outlined more fully his ideas relating to cultural pluralism and individualism. In the exploration of these ideas, we can better understand some of the forces at work in the development of the early adult education movement.

The early period of organized adult education (roughly speaking the period from 1924-1945) is often portrayed as the time of greatest intellectual ferment within the field. During this time, the principal issues for adult educators lay in defining the field. Alternative visions included adult education as a vehicle for finding meaning in life, developing the community, fostering aesthetic values, and strengthening the links between the educated citizen, freedom, and democracy. While the approaches varied, principal concerns focused on meeting the needs of the individual within a wider societal context. Kallen's work, although at this point not directly connected to the adult education movement, heavily informed some of the thinking on these matters. His principal concerns were with the dynamic tension between individualism and community and between liberty and union within American democracy.

## CULTURAL PLURALISM AND THE AMERICAN IDEA

Kallen's writings spanned sixty years and over that time he wrote over forty books and 400 articles. Within these works, his concerns, definitions, and fundamental ideas changed over time, so that it is sometimes difficult to say with certainty exactly what Kallen's views were. But despite this multiplicity of opinion, certain core issues seem to recur within the body of his work. One of his fundamental issues was the nature of American culture and the American community. Within the community, Kallen saw the individual as the formulator of basic values while depicting the individual as both product and creator of culture.

Beginning with a series of articles he wrote for the *Nation* in 1914 and 1915, Kallen characterized what he considered to be some of the fundamental aspects of American society. In essence, Kallen was interested in the question of American national character and the role of different ethnic and minority groups in both changing this character and becoming a part of it. Writing in 1915, Kallen noted that, "at the present time there is no dominant American mind." According to Kallen the American spirit was "inarticulate, not a voice but a chorus of many voices each singing a rather different tune." (1915b, p. 217).

For Kallen, this dissonance was a cause for concern, although his approach differed significantly from those advocating Americanization. Kallen (1915b, p. 219) suggested that coercive Americanization efforts were not only painful, but in the end these could not "...guarantee the survival as a unison of the older Americanism," which he defined as the Anglo-Saxon theme of the New England school. Kallen saw Americanization as a violent approach robbing groups of their collective identities and, therefore, of the conditions necessary for the development of individuality. He advocated what was later termed cultural pluralism, entailing "...no violence to our fundamental law and the spirit of our institutions nor to the qualities of men." (1915b, pp. 219-220). Cultural pluralism required a society where each ethnic group was recognized as part of the whole. Kallen assumed that each ethnic group, or in his words, "natio," possessed its own form of excellence. According to Kallen, all Americans were fundamentally ethnic, and, therefore, ethnicity was a stronger force in the United States than class. He wrote:

The fact is that similarity of class rests upon no inevitable condition, while similarity of nationality is inevitably intrinsic. Hence the poor of two different peoples tend to be less like-minded than the poor and the rich of the same peoples. (1915a, p. 194).

Kallen's analysis of American society critiqued the view that humans were primarily economic units. He based this critique on his understanding of American community values and individual integrity. Noting his affinity for much of what both anarchists and socialists were espousing in the early years of the twentieth century, Kallen explained that his basic approach prevented him from affiliating with either. For Kallen, the basic fabric of American society was based on the individual. Rather than seeing people as examples of particular "isms", Kallen viewed people as "singular, living personalities..., not varieties of a species or illustrations of a class." (1933, pp. 9-10). This view of the individual actor within society transcended both



geographic and temporal borders. While Kallen explored the power of culture in the formation of the individual, he emphasized the impossibility of culture without the individual. Thus, he wrote:

Whatever a man's religion or allegiance may be, whatever his notion about his strength or his impotence, in his heart and in his behavior he is an Individualist.

Utterly powerless though he may believe himself to be, he will act as if he has at least some power to flee suffering and to defend life. He may think of his existence as the shadow of a shadow, the helpless victim of overpowering circumstances, but he will behave as if circumstance were not overpowering and endeavor to modify it in his own behalf. He may think Communism or Fascism, Catholicism or Buddhism, but he lives Individualism. (1933, pp. 238-39).

Despite his endorsement of individual agency as the foundation of society, Kallen was by no means advocating personal pursuit of happiness irrespective of the rest of society. He held that individualism implied a responsibility for others and by its very definition embraced a concern with the welfare of the community as a whole. In a democracy, individuals created organizations and associations, maintaining them only as long as they promoted freedom and fellowship. (Kallen, 1933).

In contrast to this democratic vision of culture, Kallen juxtaposed the vision of the Kultur of the Klan. For Kallen, the rise of the Ku Klux Klan in the late nineteenth century and its revival in the 1920s was a product of a widespread loss of certainty about the country and about individual destiny. He warned that the Klan fostered "power without responsibility". (1924, p. 36). Its pernicious influence submerged the individual in conformity and made "...culture impossible in the United States." (1924, p.41).

Against what he called the Kultur Klux Klan, Kallen proposed a culture that was not conformist, but instead emerged from "manyness, variety, differentiation." This pluralism then made democratic society possible, encouraging, "individuality in groups, in persons, in temperaments, whose program liberates these individualities and guides them into a fellowship of freedom and cooperation." (1924, p. 43). But the relationship was dialectical because cultural pluralism was itself an outgrowth of democracy. Kallen wrote that:

... democracy is an essential prerequisite to culture, that culture can be and sometimes is a fine flowering of democracy, and that the history of the relation of the two in the United States exhibits this fact. (1924, p.11)

Thus, democracy, culture and by extension cultural pluralism were intertwined and served as the basis for understanding and for reforming American life. For Kallen, "Variety is not only the spice of life, it is the life of life." (1956, p. 100).

## CULTURAL PLURALISM AND THE FORMATION OF THE COMMUNITY

The themes discussed above recurred with frequency in Kallen's writings, although he did not further elaborate the idea of cultural pluralism until the 1950s. In 1956 Kallen published Cultural Pluralism and the American Idea, which explored the connections between the cultural and communal values found at the heart of his somewhat later work on adult education.

Kallen explicitly labeled the American Idea a cultural phenomenon. The key in forging an American community was to recognize and encourage diversity, while also identifying the commonalities which would bind society together. For Kallen, individuals were the heart of society, but this conception of society was not atomistic. Each individual was also the sum total of his or her individual and group past. Since individuals carried culture, culture needed to be actively fostered or it would be lost. Inevitable group differences and tensions could be negotiated, but not subsumed, through a commitment to the American Idea. A shared commitment to both the American Idea and a tolerance of difference were keys to the organization of a responsible and respectful community.

In order to spread the "gospel" of the American Idea, Kallen advocated pulling together key political documents of American history. Yet the specifics were fluid, open to change and reinterpretation. Kallen did not accept the idea of an immutable cultural heritage, but rather an elastic and inclusive one. His gospel would include representative expressions of values embodied in the American way of life such as: the Declaration of Independence; the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations; some of the Federalist papers; the Constitution; Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and Emancipation Proclamation; the Preamble to the constitution of the Knights of Labor; Woodrow Wilson's statement on the League of Nations; Bartolomeo Vanzetti's Last Statement to the Court; Franklin Roosevelt's Four Freedoms; Reports of the Truman Commission on Higher Education and Civil Rights and Supreme Court decisions on church/state separation and racial discrimination. (1956, pp. 87-88).

From this list we can clearly see that Kallen was concerned with individual rights and the rights of minorities as the central aspect of the American Idea. His vision of the American Idea incorporated a notion of social justice. In effect, Kallen saw communities and groups of individuals as having the same rights as those vouchsafed to individuals in the Declaration of Independence. Groups were individuals voluntarily joined together to form distinct entities. For Kallen the idea of culture was complex including both the cultural pluralism he was advocating and the American Idea with its commitment to minorities. He explained:

And if the pursuit of happiness be this, then the pursuit of happiness is the creation of cultures and the sporting union of their diversities as peers and equals; it is the endeavor after culture as each communion and each community, according to its own singularity of form and function, envisions its own cultural individuality and struggles to preserve, enrich, and perfect it by means of a free commerce in thoughts and things with all mankind. Cultural pluralism signalizes the harmonies of this commerce at home and abroad. It

designates that orchestration of the cultures of mankind which alone can be worked and fought for with least injustice, and with least suppression or frustration of any culture, local, occupational, national or international by any other. (1956, p. 100).

This idea of culture was predicated on Kallen's views of diversity and freedom, both of which were closely linked to his view of education as a civilizing and diversifying force. According to Kallen, the more "culture" individuals acquired (through a liberal or general education), the more they would become aware of the "other" or those groups of which they were not members. Without giving up one's own citizenship or original culture, each individual could become a "citizen of the world." (1956, p.53). Teaching the implications of the American Idea was the "most important" task facing those concerned with the country's future. Education was preparation for the "Great Vocation" of citizenship, transmitting the "living faith in the potential excellence of every man, and every natural group, according to kind...." (1924, p. 66).

Many of these issues reverberated in Kallen's discussion of adult education as articulated in Philosophical Issues in Adult Education (1962). According to Kallen, "... adult education embodies the latest, the most consequential phase of the development of education as the most characteristic institution of the country's cultural economy." (p. x). It enabled individuals to span the boundaries of time and place, making connections while also conserving group differences. Only a voluntary, cooperative society committed to equality could foster this type of community.

## CONCLUSION

Critics of contemporary adult education have claimed that the field has increasingly moved away from its original commitment to social change and the community. Its current focus on the individual is seen as a distortion of the historical legacy of the field. In fact, however, as this study indicates, ideas about the individual and the community are more complex. The question is not so much their relative primacy as their interrelationship.

Horace Kallen was a major figure in the national debate surrounding these issues; a debate often overlooked in the adult education literature. In enunciating some of the underlying issues, he also influenced the contours of the debate within the adult education community of his era. The contradictions within his work, particularly his inconsistent characterizations of the community and the individual, reverberated throughout the entire field of adult education. The questions he wrestled with (and in fact many of the problems raised by his work) can be seen in the current philosophical debates about the future of the field today. The key issue, which goes back to the 1920s, is how to conceptualize the dynamic interrelationship between individuals and communities so that both the individual's role in forming the community and the community's role in forming the individual are acknowledged.

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## **Attempting to Destroy a People by Attacking Their Way of Knowing: A Case Study of the Northern Cheyenne**

Frank C. Rowland

Interviews were conducted with elders to understand the Northern Cheyenne way of knowing. Both positive factors about the nature of Cheyenne learning and negative elements concerning the attempt to destroy the Cheyenne way of knowing were uncovered. The results suggest that problems on the reservation can best be understood from an educators perspective concerning the nature of knowing.

### **Introduction**

During the 1960's many people in this country demanded social change. Although social unrest, turmoil, and sometimes tragedy accompanied this movement for human dignity, the seeds of reform were undoubtedly planted during this era of American history. Along with other segments of society that were systematically denied their human rights, the Native American was a beneficiary of a heightened sense of pluralism and equality in this society.

Although educational policies toward the Native American began in early colonial times, religious conversion and assimilation into the dominant culture were the driving themes until recent times (McNickle, 1973, p. 114). It was not until the establishment of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1972 (P.L. 92-638) that tribes gained greater control over their own educational policies. With this legislation Indian tribes could contract with the federal government for services such as education, law enforcement, and health. Formerly these community functions were administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. According to this act, Indian control of education was perceived as an important element for the future development and progress of Native American communities.

Propelled by the sentiment for Indian self-determination, Congress passed the Tribally Controlled Community College Assistance Act in 1978 (P.L. 95-471) and acknowledged that Indian communities could rightfully charter their own institutions of higher education. The importance of this legislation is twofold. First, by providing greater access to higher education, tribes could begin to address the desperate social and economic conditions on reservations. Second, the form and function of these new educational programs were to be culturally relevant to provide a basis by which Indian people could rebuild their tribal identities. Subsequent to the Tribal College Act, Indian institutions of higher education were firmly established. Today, tribal colleges number 24 and serve approximately 4,400 full-time students (Boyer, 1989, p. 30).

The framers of Indian controlled higher education set out on a noble and worthy journey in 1978. In order to proceed in the true spirit of Indian self-determination, it is now imperative that each school become attuned to the cultural needs of their respective tribes. In short, Indian higher education, which is one major measure of Indian self-determination, can only occur when the successes of tribal colleges are in harmony with the ideals of Indian communities.

### **Purpose**

Although culturally relevant education is recognized as a vital element for the self-determination of Indian people, success in this area has been limited and is essentially nonexistent for the Northern Cheyenne people in southeastern Montana. The purpose of this study was twofold. First, an examination of the knowledge and the experiences of the tribal elders on the reservation today was conducted in order to get a more precise idea of how education is defined within the traditional framework of the Northern Cheyenne system. Second, the perspectives of the elders were used as a basis to make recommendations about how educational practice can adapt to the current needs of the Northern Cheyenne. In order to discover the purpose of education as perceived by the Cheyenne, this study was guided by the following research questions: (a) What are the Cheyenne concepts of wisdom and knowledge? (b) What are the characteristics of Cheyenne teacher and student? (c) What is the educational environment and the process of teaching in the Cheyenne culture? and (d) What is the role of education within the Cheyenne community?

### **The Cheyenne People**

Now residing on the Northern Cheyenne reservation in south eastern Montana, the Northern Cheyenne are essentially two bands: the Suhtai and the Tsistsistas. These two bands are of the same Algonkin linguistic stock and have now lived together since the early nineteenth century (Grinnell, 1915, p. 3). The Cheyenne are now referred to as the "Northern" Cheyenne and are distinguished from their cousins the "Southern" Cheyenne now living in Oklahoma.

The Cheyenne have adapted successfully to rapid changes around them. The perseverance of their society was fueled by the integrity of a distinct way of knowing. According to Weist (1970) a major theme in Cheyenne history is:

The remarkable story of how during a period of less than 350 years, the Cheyenne were able to adjust to different environments and adapt to what were essentially four different ways of life--as hunters and fishers living on the shores of lakes in Northern Woodlands, as planters living in earth lodges, villagers on the Minnesota, Sheyenne and Missouri rivers, as mounted buffalo warriors in the Black Hills and on the Great Plains, and their more recent years on the reservation. (p.6)

Although ravaged by warfare against invading whites, by diseases introduced from the Old World, and by misguided and often tragic federal policies, the moral and ethical belief system endured. Today the Cheyenne belief in Maheo the Creator, the importance of spiritual cleansing and renewal, and the tantamount belief in tribalism continue to persist and indicate that Cheyenne have a profound knowledge of the world and their place in it. Indeed, Cheyenne myth and cosmology contain essential directives for the proper conduct of modern Cheyennes (Moore, 1974, p. 12).

### **The Nature of Cheyenne Learning**

The interviews conducted with 19 elders of the Northern Cheyenne tribe regarded traditional ways of knowing. From these interviews, categorical information was established delineating tribal concepts of education. From a philosophical and spiritual perspective, the Cheyenne perceive their existence and purpose in life very differently from that which is accepted in the larger non-Indian society. Because of this and the fact that the Cheyenne continue to exist and remain steadfast in their beliefs, a dichotomy exists between the Cheyenne way of knowing and that reality

imposed upon them by outside authorities of the reservation system. Most regrettably, the elders have reported that history has not proven itself well for Cheyenne education. At once, the fundamental Cheyenne belief that all living things must live in harmony is being aborted by a reservation system driven by a white value set. Whether it be church or governmental authority, when left unchecked, the effect has been to systematically supplant or distort the traditional Cheyenne way of knowing.

Spiritual and physical realities are intimately bound in the Cheyenne way, and the extent of an individual's knowledge of this system is commensurate with how well one can contribute to the well being of the tribe. Therefore, the Cheyenne believe the most important knowledge is that which will alleviate pain within this world and thereby make the tribe stronger as a whole.

By communicating with other life forms, certain people with special powers could act to help others in the community. For example, one elder reported, "There was an old man in Birney who was a grandfather to Young Bird who could talk to animals. If a family had someone missing, they would go to this man and by using his medicine he would be able to tell the family where to find that person". Another elder related, "I lived the traditional teachings when I was very young. My grandmother used to doctor people".

The Cheyenne also understand that the creator can act independent of them in providing knowledge to the Cheyenne. "Certain individuals make songs and yet they have never been involve in the ceremonies. Sometimes these songs come to them in dreams and they bring them to us to use." The Cheyenne believe that both the conscious and unconscious mind work in unison to perceive reality. To underscore this the Cheyennes believe that "dreams can tell you about what is to come in the future. My adopted brother has that gift. That is what he has been taught".

To demonstrate the importance the Cheyenne place on the role of the unconscious, it is believed that the Creator through spirit helpers can provide knowledge. Often these lessons are not induced or received through conscious efforts.

Thus, knowledge is sacred not only as it is imparted from the world beyond but as it is shared between Cheyennes in the world today. Therefore, knowledge must be honored with an exchange of something of value by whomever wishes to obtain it. Typically this transaction would proceed by someone saying, "I'm going to give you this horse because I want to know the expertise that you have so I can always help my people." In the view of the Cheyenne, knowledge and spirituality are inseparable. Knowledge is measured by how well it benefits the tribe, and good knowledge is sought after and passed down through the generations.

Leading a spiritual life is the essence of being Cheyenne. "We can have the intellectual prowess and the economic power, but without the spiritual guide we will no longer survive as a people." Knowledge is sacred and is a gift from Maheo in order to enlighten and enhance the journey of life. This in turn is a telling statement of the beneficent role Maheo has toward the Cheyenne.

This system is infused with a sacredness and the potential for knowledge is represented in all living things. However, in order for the Cheyenne to survive, other living things are here to help them. In order to reconcile death with life, living things must be sacrificed in a respectful and honorable way. For this to occur and to be truly Cheyenne requires that one be knowledgeable and receptive to the spirituality of life and demonstrate this in daily life.

Spirituality played a vital role in daily existence. So, "if something happens accidentally, there are things that you do that ward off the accident. Otherwise, things could happen to you before the sun went down. We quickly learned things we were not to do and there were a lot of them." In order to understand how Cheyennes were touched each day by spirituality, one elder said, "I learned from my grandmother to pray every morning and evening. I was taught from her that it was important to pray before starting something new or before going on a trip. This was done to prevent something from going wrong and to have protection."

The Cheyennes believe spirituality is invaluable in the health of individual tribal members. "Because of my continuing heart problems, I made a vow to my grandfather, and I Sun Danced for 4 years in a row. After that the problems I had with my heart went away." This individual deliberately sought out spiritual help and in turn was blessed not only with good health but also able to use this moment in his life to begin acquiring the knowledge and power of a medicine man.

Just as modern science can not explain the recovery of a heart patient by enduring the physical punishment of the Sun Dance, individuals who were deeply spiritual demonstrated powers beyond understanding. For example, "there was an old man who had so much knowledge about things that I used to just sit there and think to myself how much I wanted to be like him. He could understand the dogs when they would bark." When the dogs talked to this individual they would provide important messages for the well-being of the community.

By being attuned to other life forms the Cheyenne understood that all living things, including the spirits, were connected. Therefore, the ceremonial people, who the most closely attuned to this reality were most highly respected. In traditional times "a lot of the Sun Dance people were highly respected because they led a good life." In addition, "people that were strong in their Indian religion and those that were considered 'healers' were highly respected." Further, the Cheyenne recognized that because of the interconnectedness of life, spirituality which is tantamount to life's existence, cannot be dissected and set aside but must be used to guide moral and productive lives. Indeed, life is reciprocal between that world which is known and that which is not. It is understood that life is more than physical aging. Indeed, it means a process of learning about lessons provided by Maheo. For example, once during a visit to Bear Butte, the Cheyenne holy land, the older men chose to give higher status to a younger man. This younger man related "the older ceremonial men put me first and I asked them 'Why do I have to be first?' They said, 'We respect your ways, you pray better, you have more knowledge than us, and you learned a lot before you came to us.'" For the Cheyenne, wisdom is taking sacred lessons and applying them in life as well as demonstrating through actions the lessons that have been learned. Thus, both the spiritual and physical realities provide revelations to lead a good life.

Life's experience is a continuing revelation by Maheo. "The old Cheyenne believed that experience in life was a prerequisite to wisdom." One elder spoke of how he had served two terms in World War II. After returning home from the service, he was elected to the tribal council. In a discussion with some of his elders he related that "when I was 37-years old, I was serving on the tribal council. One day I walked into the store and was asked by an old man about something regarding council business. Another old man responded to this by saying, 'Why are you asking him? He just grew up!'"

For the Cheyenne, wisdom was learning how to use profound knowledge to help the community. If knowledge was gained but was not used to help the community, it



was meaningless. One elder was told by his uncle, "I heard you. You talk good--like a lawyer. But you don't live the way you talk."

Therefore, the perpetuation of the Cheyenne way involves deep spirituality and using this knowledge to promote the community by living harmoniously as an individual with all other life forms. Such a way of life supports the fundamental Cheyenne belief that reality is comprised of a complex of interrelated parts which are dependent on the other and which are all infused with the spirit of Maheo.

### **The Fracture of the Cheyenne Way**

The sentiment of American policy-makers at the turn of the century could be summarized by the comment of the founder of Carlisle Indian School when in he stated, "All the Indian there is in the race should be dead. Kill the Indian in him and save the man" (Prucha, 1984, p. 191). In the following years, virtually every tribe would be effected by federal policies designed to change Indian people into the vision of what the non-Indian thought was good. This motive was pervasive in the educational policies directed at Indian people. According to Szasz (1974), Indian education meant: "In the fifty years before the publication of the Meriam Report [1928], the federal government pursued a policy of total assimilation of the American Indian into the mainstream society. Recognizing the vast difficulties in achieving this goal, Congress and the Indian Bureau adopted a plan to remold the Indian's conception of life, or what came to be known as his 'system of values.' If this could be changed, assimilationist reasoned, the Indian would then become like the whiteman. The Indian system of values was expressed in the education of his children and his attitude toward the land. Consequently, the assimilationists chose to attack these two concepts as the major targets of their campaign" (p. 8).

The Cheyenne were no exception. Whether they be Christian or government boarding schools, children were sent off for training for periods of up to five years without returning home to their families (Stands In Timber, 1967, p. 289). Regrettably, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the trustee for tribal people, provided education authorities great and obtrusive power into the lives of Cheyenne people by initiating and condoning assimilationist policies.

Assimilation meant the Cheyenne were subject to the willful control of others; to be told when, how, and what to eat; how to dress and how to act. This is criminal by itself and struck at the spirituality of and otherwise beautiful culture. In their discussions, the elders discussed many of the cruel and dehumanizing forms that this control took.

For example, in order to enforce governmental policies of education, several elements were established. First, educational policies for mandatory attendance, were strictly enforced by the reservation police. These police who were Cheyenne themselves but were hired to enforce the will of the government and were not respected (Stands In Timber, 1967, p. 271). One elder recalled the role of reservation police by reporting that, "The police all rode horse back and travelled in force. Their main concern was to keep kids in school." Upon occasion, reservation police did not hesitate to show force. For example, "my mother told me that one little boy kept running away from school. One day this little boy's father was bringing him back to school after he had run away when a policeman, who was known to show his authority, shot the father in the leg".

Short of police actions, the BIA exerted force to prompt families to send their children to school. "There was a law on the reservation that said your children must

be sent to school when they turned 6 years of age. If parents didn't send their kids to school, they wouldn't get their rations to feed their families". Reservation police went to great lengths to enforce this policy. An elder recalled, "I left Lame Deer to stay with my uncle in Lodge Grass. The authorities found out, and soon they found out where I was. When I realized they were looking for me, I hitched a ride on the train and was intending to go stay with some of my relatives in Billings. They [tribal police] chased that train all the way to Hardin where they ordered it to stop. After they caught me, I was taken back to Lame Deer where I was forced to go to school."

All of the strife put on the Cheyenne has a culminating effect of threatening the existence of the Cheyenne way of life. In the traditional way, the acquisition of knowledge was intimately tied to the purposes foreseen for the community. By having outsiders take away the purpose of society, the Cheyenne are now experiencing a disintegration within their communities and are thus having great difficulty acquiring proper Cheyenne knowledge. Due to apathy, distrust, and racism, the legitimacy of the teachers is now in question, and the result is that there is no system now in place that has the respect or support to pass on vital Cheyenne knowledge to future generations. In addition, because this system of knowledge acquisition and transmittal has been rendered useless, it is becoming increasingly meaningless for many Cheyennes who are having a difficult enough time providing for their own immediate needs.

Because the Cheyenne turned the violence inward on themselves, they no longer asking questions of who they are; they now ask who they are not. For example, on the point of race, too many Cheyennes know they are not white. They know this not by the trusting in their own integrity and teachings but by judging others simply by skin color.

However, despite all of the turmoil and the formidable problems that need to be dealt with, the elders feel strongly about the strength of spirituality and the revival of the culture, "After becoming involved in the ceremonies, I now speak Cheyenne to my grandchildren more than I ever did to my own kids. In turn my grandchildren have become interested in the culture." As a final note, one elder feels optimistic that others are now beginning to appreciate the Cheyenne ways. "During the past 5 years, I have been asked by the schools in Lame Deer, Birney, and Ashland to talk about Cheyenne stories and plants and how to take care of the environment." This elder was especially pleased that she has assumed the role of teacher to others and is now an active part of the community.

### Conclusion

The stories and recollections of the Cheyenne elders clearly illustrate an attempt by the federal government and its support system to eliminate the Cheyenne people by destroying its traditional way of knowing. The traditional Cheyenne way of knowing stabilized the tribe and gave it strength. By undermining it with social, political, and economic actions and policies for nearly 100 years, the government almost succeeded in destroying the Cheyenne people. However, the traditional way of knowing was not totally destroyed and served for the elders as a means for preserving their identity.

It is common practice to look at issues and problems on reservations from the perspectives of a sociologist, psychologist, or historian. However, these problems may be better understood by examining them from the view of an educator: How have these problems resulted from an attempt to destroy a people's way of knowing, and

how can a people's traditional way of knowing be used to address these problems? Such an approach holds that educators need to rethink the importance of their profession. This study suggests that education is on a par with other disciplines in terms of understanding human behavior, and as Horton (1989) and Freire imply, it is an integral part of social and governmental policy.

Specifically, this approach suggests that the first phase of Cheyenne education must include dealing with the oppression and internal strife of the tribe. Tribal spirituality and mentorships should be involved in reservation education in order for learning to be meaningful for the purposes of the tribe. Additional conclusions and recommendations from this perspective relate to topics such as the Cheyenne holistic system as a mechanism for tribal regeneration, the latent effects of oppression, and the primary components of Cheyenne education. Significantly, the tribal college on the reservation can play an essential role in using the voice of the elders to empower the community.

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## Racial Formation in the Reporting of Canadian Immigration

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**Abstract:** Using Howard Winant's racial formation theory, I analyze the coverage of news stories and editorials in Canada's national newspaper in light of recent changes to Canadian immigration policy. Discourse analysis reveals the structural and racial significance of immigration to the racialization of Canadian identity.

In *Racial conditions* (1994) Howard Winant outlines the elements of his racial formation theory as a way of providing a coherent explanation of contemporary racial phenomena. He acknowledges that as the meaning of race differs across societies and over time, changing definitions of racial theory are needed: most currently, one that opposes the reductionist view of racial difference as merely economic, cultural, or national phenomena (p. 3). The need for a coherent theory is premised on Winant's idea of racial projects in which social structures are ineluctably built upon the meaning of race, which is to say, that racial rules and racial identities are co-constructing.

In this paper I employ Howard Winant's understanding of race to explore recent changes to Canadian immigration policy as it was portrayed in 1994 over a ten-week period in *The Globe and Mail*, a daily which claims the title of "Canada's National Newspaper". I use Winant's theoretical concept of race to examine the news stories and editorials that report on immigration. I also inquire into the nature of racial signification that operates in Canadian society to maintain structural inequality on the basis of race, especially in regard to recent immigration policy.

Winant maintains that race is "simultaneously a global and local phenomenon, politically contested from the largest to the smallest of social terrains" (p. 113). He establishes that, in local and global dimensions, race is thinkable in terms of hegemony. It is within a view of hegemony that racial formation theory may be used as a way to analyze a contemporary racial project, such as the Canadian immigration levels for 1994 as reported in *The Globe and Mail*. The mapping of this project of immigration and how it is reported permits an analysis of racial formation in the Canadian setting. This analysis is part of an on-going study into anti-racist pedagogy and the construction of white-skin subjectivity as an identifying characteristic in Canadian national identity—a construction which permits the learning about racial oppression to be easily resisted and to conclude in only marginal and temporary changes.

### 1. Immigration and the imagined Canadian community

In his acceptance of the 1994 Governor-General's award for English language fiction, Rudy Wiebe declared that "Only the stories we tell each other will create us as a true, Canadian people".<sup>1</sup> This desire to tell each other who we are for the purposes



of an articulated national self-consciousness is, in part, suggested in Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* ([1983] 1994) in which he explores the historical development of nation-ness, the changing meanings attached to nations, and why "they command such profound emotional legitimacy" (p. 4). The title prefaces Anderson's definition of the nation as "an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (p. 6). For the purposes of this paper, the imagined Canadian community is the one constituted by the reports in *The Globe and Mail* from September 1 to November 10, 1994. In examining the message and the way of telling of the changes to immigration policy in Canada as reported in *The Globe and Mail*, none of the incidents stands isolated from present day and historical nation formation.

Nations, as imagined communities, are not distinguished by the falsity or genuineness of their occurrence, but "in the style in which they are imagined" (p. 6). Therefore we might ask, in general, what is the basis of the communion that citizens imagine that they share with their fellow citizens? How have they articulated themselves to each other? What explains the attachment people "feel for the inventions of their imaginations" (Anderson, p. 141)? What does a Canadian self-articulation mean in concrete terms? In racial terms? Who gets to decide?

How nations see themselves as constituted differently from others is an ambivalent process taken up in language. It is in public discourse that we see proclamations of national identity expressed as cultural beliefs. In the work of Teun van Dijk (1993), each of five selected countries studied by van Dijk relied on its own peculiar vocabulary to express statements of nationalism as a defense against accusations of racism. Racism is able to operate through a basic belief in one's country as humane, benevolent, hospitable and modern—all qualities that can be held up as proof against the possibility of intolerance and discrimination. Van Dijk's work studies the way in which elite institutions, rather than representing fair and equitable treatment, reproduce racism in a way that coincides with the status quo in socially acceptable ways compared to unacceptably overt acts of racism.

The racism organized by elite discourse is more likely to be present in the everyday, mundane acts, attitudes, and opinions that contribute to dominance by whites. Overt forms of racism are the only forms most elites recognize and which most would condemn. This narrow definition of racism enable elites to deny that they have a hand in perpetuating it. Van Dijk makes a convincing argument for searching elite groups for some of the roots and the perpetuation of racism in society. Insofar as elite groups participate in the control of public discourse, they do so through their access to and domination of symbolic and actual communication systems and therefore have a leading role in shaping the discourse underlying racism. The hegemony of elite institutions such as *The Globe and Mail* is exercised through its signification as a national newspaper and through the structuring of its racist rhetoric in nationalist terms—the vocabulary which, if it were declared racist, would seem to be an attack on the "reasonableness" and "balanced" approach of the Canadian state.

On November 2, 1994, Immigration Minister Sergio Marchi made the annual announcement that would set the level of immigrants admitted to Canada for the coming year. In the months leading up to what is a routine, annual announcement of immigration levels for the coming year, *The Globe and Mail* published many news stories and editorials on the theme of nationalism and immigration; in the week before November 2, it averaged one piece a day. By the time the announcement arrived on

November 2, the readership of Canada's national newspaper had been well prepared to imagine Canada and the community of its most recent immigrants.

In announcing the new levels and conditions of immigration, news stories and editorials generally reiterated three topics or themes. The most often repeated theme comprises the statistical arguments for or against the effects of immigration. This includes information about who the immigrants are, the contribution they make to the country, Canada's historical need for them, present and past levels of immigration, and the amount of money spent on settlement needs of new immigrants. The second theme centres on the decision-making process by which immigration levels are set. In a simulated tug-of-war, editorial writers briefly espouse humanitarian reasons for immigration but with quixotic swiftness, opt instead, for economic justifications for immigration levels in what is called a "balance" between humanitarianism and economics. In this justification, the independent class of immigrant is favoured over the family-class because the former must have job and language skills that can be put to good, entrepreneurial use. The person who enters under independent-class status is purportedly easier to control and is one on whom the immigration system can more readily exercise its "discretion". Third, newspaper coverage was marked by the words that are used to describe the nature of Canada and things Canadian. Much is made of the history of immigration and the high rate of Canada's refugee settlement in the industrialized world. Statements are made to the effect that in spite of the "burden" of immigration, Canadians continue to act "civilly" and with "open-mindedness". Changes introduced by recent immigrants are associated mainly with the negative, that is, with things un-Canadian.

*The Globe and Mail* was largely in favour of the coming changes, and there was very little surprise in the new conditions and levels when they were finally announced. The anticipation and volume of coverage Minister Marchi's annual announcement generated verifies the highly politicized process that immigration has become and has perhaps always been. Clearly, the implications of this border crossing event of immigration provoke a continual re-evaluation of how we may imagine the Canadian community.

## 2. The implications of racial formation theory

Factual information profiling immigrants and showing the significant structural contributions they make to Canadian society has almost nothing to do with the news stories and editorials that appear in the ten-week period under examination. Only one story<sup>2</sup> in July reported 1991 Statscan figures that would debunk myths about immigrants if decision-making were based on logic and not negative stereotyping and racism. Citing the "worth" of immigrants to Canadian society cannot penetrate the discourse of fear and the signification of the other that pervades discussion about immigration levels; discussions based on humanitarianism are mentioned only superficially.

As an explanation for the "hysteria"<sup>3</sup> around immigration, an October 24 article<sup>4</sup> confirms that "The current discontent stems from the changing face of the family class. Immigrants from Asia and the Caribbean began to outnumber those from Europe in the late 1970s." In that the largest source of family class immigrants are from non-white countries in this order: India, Hong Kong, Philippines, China, the non-white bodies are increasingly at odds with an imagined white community. Therefore the restriction of the family class status is justified as a "better balance" and "sensible".

Winant's view of hegemony as both structure and signifier is evident in immigration policy at many levels. While these distinctions are artificially opposed, like the private/public split or that of the systems world/life world, in practice they are "congruent at the level of experience". Increasing the immigration levels for the independent class and lowering it for the family class is a case in point. Here the formal, legislated answer—decreasing family class immigration—undermines itself by neglecting the question regarding the familial, personal interest in how the independent entrepreneur is to enjoy his/her personal life when admission to family and relatives is restricted.

Susan J. Smith's historical account (1993) serves as an illustration of how the commercial nature of immigration continues its *long durée* in normative cultural practices. In the Canadian tradition, immigration is about regulation, selectivity, and nation-building. Smith traces the way immigration policy, in recent years, has become increasingly and unabashedly market driven and inexorably tied to the "ideals of enterprise culture" (p. 61). The net effect of the tight systems of control is to maintain immigration as a business transaction which exchanges potential citizenship for the regulation and commodification of predominantly non-white bodies.

Opposition to immigration is generally couched in economic terms that have entered into the lexicography of justifiable resistance. That reliance on economic justification serves as a cover for racism is most obvious when the use of the rhetoric alone can be relied upon to override the examination of economically unsound proposals. As Toni Morrison aptly states "The master narrative [can] make any number of adjustments to keep itself in tact" (1992, p. 51). The fact that limiting the family class of immigrants has been shown not to make good economic sense is irrelevant to those who oppose immigration. Economic reasoning serves other purposes: it is used to signify that in dealing with immigrants, Canadian nationalism is a commercial transaction and not to be confused with the birthright of the natural born citizen. It also provides an "objective" standard which will be seen as fair and reasonable. As the day of the government announcement draws closer, it is clear that measures taken will be weighed in terms of economic significance, by now, raised to a virtue beyond humanitarianism. From a government document, we are told that "the citizenship and immigration program must be *more than fair and compassionate*. It must be affordable and sustainable"<sup>5</sup>.

In the *long durée* of racial inscription on the human body, the phenotypical signification of the white body has impressed itself upon the world as conqueror and oppressor. The domination by white bodies has become the expression and narration of white culture and identity. White controlled institutions also maintain the right to determine the meaning of individual identity defined in terms of white personhood. The excellent article by Cheryl Harris (1993) describes the way in which whiteness itself is a property and a designation of personhood. The loss of land on the part of Native Indians and the appropriation of land by European settlers is more than a structural transfer of land ownership. It also signifies the racial domination that whiteness confers as property, whiteness being the signifier by which property could be rightly bought or sold. Although whiteness is not an objective fact, it is maintained through exclusion or subordination. The status of whiteness is maintained and protected in the way one would protect one's property especially if it were tied to plans for the future or to the realization of one's personhood. It is the exclusivity of this status of whiteness that is being guarded in the immigration/influx of many modern-day, non-white settlers.

### 3. Telling words

One exercise accomplished in the debate about immigration is the emotional shoring up of positive identification and the articulation of admired qualities one would like to have or be able to imagine for one's national community. Following van Dijk's (1993) example, these are some Canadian qualities as recorded in the words of *The Globe and Mail* coverage: civility, open-mindedness; demanding of tolerance, effort, growth; inspiring to other nations; productive; "not prideful and self-promotional" (stated with no intention of irony in the editorial "The genius of Canada" — September 14, 1994).

Overwhelmingly, "balanced" was the single, most often-used word to describe the reduction in immigration levels and the restrictions placed on all classes. The implications are that both humanitarian and economic concerns have been considered and weighed; and that other politicians, given the chance, would have been more extreme. If the policy is balanced, then Canada can maintain its historically heralded characteristics: sensible, level-headed, generous.

### 4. Racial formation (conclusion)

Resistance to immigration in Canada is an indication of the white racism/supremacy that underlies the concept of nation-building and nationalism, and Canada is by no means alone in its co-construction of race and nationalism. What is important is to map, however, the specific discursive processes by which racial meanings are decided in the Canadian context. In Canada, persistent racial inequality has met with active resistance on particular issues but has not received the public attention that more recently characterizes racial projects and the increasingly widespread discussions of race.

From a racial formation perspective the politicizing of immigration projects makes sense in light of the right wing policy direction taken by federal governments in recent years. Whereas elites effectively use pedagogy to manage change, a more useful pedagogy is possible in the examination process of the racial projects themselves. Winant's racial formation theory suggests a pedagogy which draws on the history and contingency of inequalities, the effects of the conflictual nature of race on the body, and the promotion of the "dual consciousness" of inequality; all of which are ripe for discussion in the present day racial climate.

The racial project of Canadian immigration is characterized by activities designed to protect against the loss of Canadian identity as a country populated predominantly by white people. The desire of the imagined community as expressed in the elite institution of the national newspaper is that the nation maintain its dominant white embodiment. A great deal of effort, however, goes into denying that this is the desire of elite and popular groups because to hold this desire is not only racist; it is by definition, un-Canadian.

Historical and present day immigration as one of the defining moments of Canadian life continues to be positively imagined. In spite of the harsh racism evident in the immigration story, it is the polyglot nature of Canadian society on which nationalism continues to congratulate itself. In recent times a neo-conservative business agenda in elite institutions has made it possible to be blatant about immigration as an economic transaction. The reality is that Canada cannot do without immigrants; they are necessary both for the economic viability of the country and for the production of the imagined community as heroic.



<sup>1</sup> November 15, 1994: an interview on CBC radio *As it Happens*.

<sup>2</sup> *The Globe and Mail*, Study debunks immigrant myths — July 13, 1994. The Statscan figures found that immigrants are more hard-working, better educated, and more stable than people born here. Immigrants exceeded Canadian averages in the following ways: the number of university degrees, more education, holding managerial or professional jobs, married, less likely to be divorced, more likely to be in the work force. Immigrants make up 16% of the Canadian population—stable since 1951.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, In a debate over the “quality” of immigrants, immigrants win — October 31, 1994.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, Family immigration faces change — October 24, 1994.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, Canada to cut immigration in 1995 — October 29, 1994 (my emphasis).

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## "HOW DID HUMANS BECOME RESOURCES ANYWAY?:" HRD AND THE POLITICS OF LEARNING IN THE WORKPLACE

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**Abstract:** : This paper examines the origins of HRD. It argues that HRD emerged out of the struggles over the control of work and the workplace during and immediately after World War II.

### *Introduction*

Human Resource Development (HRD), a concept barely known until about twenty-five years ago, has become the dominant model for workplace education. Yet the social, historical and political context in which HRD emerged has been little explored.<sup>1</sup> Much of the historical work that does exist has uncritically viewed HRD as the latest and most humanistic phase of an ongoing educational process where an organization facilitates the learning of its employees to become more productive and "empowered". Human capital theory, the theoretical root of HRD, is viewed as the latest and most effective way for organizations to train their employees. Traditional histories have taken an anecdotal and evolutionary approach to emergence of HRD. Thus virtually anything remotely resembling education is seen as a precursor to present day HRD activities. This has lead to some almost bizarre claims as to the historical origins of training and development and its latest manifestation, HRD. Some have traced the origins of HRD back the creation of a "mature" factory system in the 1880s, others back to the apprenticeship system, and still others back to 1630 when efficient "management of the factors of production" created the circumstances in which the workforce was educated. *The Handbook for Training and Development* begins its discussion of the history of training by highlighting the training involved in building a Summarian Palace in 3500 B.C.<sup>2</sup>

In contrast to this rather simplistic and uncritical examinations, this paper argues that the field of HRD has emerged from the specific historical, economic and social situation in the United States after World War II. Rather than a chronological history, this paper examines three themes which lead to the creation of the present form of worker discipline, of which, it is argued HRD is a part. The themes are: 1) the emergence of corporate training during World War II leading to the creation of American Society of Training and Development (ASTD); 2) the strength of the labor movement after the second world war and 3) the emergence of human capital theory. Embedded within these themes is the ongoing struggle over who controls workers' knowledge.

### *The Emergence of Corporate Training*

Industrial training was provided through corporation schools as early as 1872. These schools varied in structural and content, provided training in everything from technical skills to English-as a second-language to salesmanship. Influenced by the Frederick Taylor's management theories, corporation schools where a means

to acclimate the workforce to a rationalized industrialization process; efficiency was always of utmost concern. In a reveling statement a General Electric executive stated that a corporation school:

...is an elementary school conducted by a corporation to Americanize alien railway labor, for instance; or a commercial school with university class rooms, and sometimes university lectures and credit; or a technical school with a course extending, as in one corporation, through four years of work of company worktime, demanding two hours each day, and a total of 10,960 hours in all, for bonus and diploma. <sup>3</sup>

In 1913, thirty-five large corporations banded together to organize the National Association of Corporation Schools. Largely supported by the New York Edison Company, the NACS became a primary means to educate the workforce without outside control. In fact, while the NACS sought to establish reciprocal relationships with universities for management retraining, the association vehemently opposed any public scrutiny of its activities. The US entrance into World War I provided the NACS, with the opportunity to offer its services to the Council on National Defense for Industrial Training for the War Emergency. A similar organization, the National Association of Employment Managers (later the Industrial Relations Association of America) also brought corporate educators together. Both organizations were enamored with the scientific management theories of Taylor and both organizations saw their importance rise with World War I mobilization.<sup>4</sup>

If World War I was the beginning of a national network of corporate control of formal education, then World War II shaped the form of much of employer workplace education. A major task during World War II was to train the large numbers of workers (many of them women) who were entering the workforce. Out of these experiences the War Manpower Commission, a federal government agency, came the basic ideas, still in practice, of on-the job training. The men who provided leadership for this Commission and who later became important inspirations for the creation of the American Society of Training Directors (later Training and Development) represented the cream of corporate power and prestige: Chan Dooley of Standard Oil of New Jersey; Walter Dietz of Western Electric; Michael Kane of AT&T; Glenn Bardiner of Forstman Woolen Mills and William Conner of U.S. Steel.<sup>5</sup>

Founded in 1942 at meeting of the American Petroleum Institute, the American Society for Training Directors began publishing its journal *Industrial Training News* in 1945 and by the end of the 1940s training was an important component of many of the newly created personnel departments. Corporate interest in training and the subsequent founding of the ASTD and the rise of personnel departments during after the World War II was not coincidental. Rather, it was in response to the challenges posed by a newly powerful and confident labor movement eager to become involved in fundamental issues of workplace control, including training and other personnel matters.

## *The Struggle Over Workers Knowledge*

John Brophy, a United Mineworker Leader, reflected back on his days of learning to be coal miner by working with his father. Brophy remarked that:

It was a great satisfaction to me that my father was a skilled, clean workman with everything kept in shape. The skill with which you undercut the vein, the judgment in drilling the coal after it had been undercut and placing the exact amount of explosive so that it would do an effective job of breaking the coal from the solid.. indicated the quality of his work.<sup>6</sup>

Brophy notes that the miner in his day was quit aware that all knowledge didn't start with his generation, that miners had lived and worked and struggled and had passed their working knowledge on to their children and they in turn passed this knowledge on to their children. It was scientific management and Fordism which would, of course, threaten this sense of not only the control of one's work but the struggle over who controlled working knowledge. In mining, for example, once the process became mechanized, work could become subdivided. This subdivided work could come under close supervision by the foreman. As one miner put it: "Anyone with a weak head and a strong back can load machine coal, *but a man has to think and study every day like you was studying a book* if he is going to get the best of the coal when he uses only a pick."<sup>7</sup>(emphasis added)

This deskilling process, with its relentless drive for efficiency, occurred in many industries and at a varying rate. In a short time, a new category was invented. Harvey Braverman has described how the term semiskilled was invented in the 1930s by the U.S. Census Bureau in the 1930s. Anyone working with machinery would now not be considered unskilled but semiskilled. Thus, resulting from a decision made by the director of the Census Bureau, machine operators from now on were defined as having more skills than someone who had spent a lifetime operating a farm. Braverman points to struggle that began with Taylorism before the first World War and reached its peak shortly after the World War II : the attempt to control workers knowledge and skills.<sup>8</sup>

By the end of the Second World War, American organized labor had reached a point where J.B.S. Harman, educational director for the Amalgamated Clothing Workers noted the "...amazingly rapid growth of unionism and of its power \_ otential goes beyond anything ever known." Indeed labor union membership had grown five-fold since 1933. In many of the major manufacturing industries coal, steel, auto, rubber, etc.) union coverage was almost complete. Moreover, an attempt to break the coal miners union during World War II had failed and a string of strikes during the first years after the Second World War, resulted in a series of labor triumphs. The attempt to establish a labor extension service was seen as an almost certainty. "Labor unions," Hardman noted, "have become a social power in the nation and are conscious of their new importance." Indeed, during the late 1940s, the labor movement was poised to reassert itself in ways that were to threaten management and harken back to the early days of John Brophy: worker control of the shopfloor and worker control of knowledge.<sup>9</sup>



The issue for unions centered on labor's refusal to agree to any specific functions that were exclusively management.<sup>10</sup> Everything was open for negotiations, including the right to manage. The end result would be, so the unions hoped, a joint management with worker control of the shopfloor, including workers knowledge. The Congress for Industrial Organizations (CIO) advocated a policy that would make government coequal with management with the government acting as an arbitrator. The newness of these demands provoked uneasiness within the existing generations of managers. First the depression and then to some extent the war had confined the unions ability to move beyond such "bread and butter" issues as wages, hours, vacations and the rudiments of grievance and seniority systems. Now, however, with the end of the war, industrial management was confronted with new challenges from the unions. The challenge to management centered around personnel issues. Unions demanded (and succeed in getting in some industries) the right to become involved in discipline, bonus charges, job assignments, and involvement in training and education programs. Unions wanted involvement in financial policy, wage determination policies and other production issues as well. Unions, in short sought to co-manage the enterprise.

The war, when labor was in short supply, had caused many grievances and attempts at creating more equitable working conditions. The shopfloor had become the site of struggle. Indeed, unionization movement has swept thorough the ranks of foreman, the front line managers. In 1946 one study quoted a management official saying "We recognize that in some of our shops the union committeeman exercises greater authority than the foreman." An automobile executive stated: "If any manager in this industry tells you he has control of his plant he is a damn liar." As labor historian David Brody noted, American industry felt itself embattled on every level; unions felt that they had a right to bargain regarding all functions of management, including training. In some industries, it was shop stewards who decided how rates where to be set and who was going to receive training.<sup>11</sup>

The co-management of enterprises did not occur. While the reasons for this are complex, the refusal of large corporations to surrender at any cost their management function largely revolved around personnel issues. That is, in return for a dramatic increase in wages, and strong pension, health and vacation plans attempts at co-management were surrendered. However, the personnel function itself was totally under the control of management. That is, while the amount of the benefits were negotiable, the control and administration these functions was under management, specifically under the personnel department, control. The modern training function grew out of this context. Training was a personnel function; it became something that the company largely organized and operated for its own interests.

### ***From Personnel Departments to Human Resource Management***

With the establishment of clear-cut distinctions between management and union spheres, management turned to developing ways in which workers could be shaped and controlled. Here to events during and shortly after the second world war played a crucial role. Indeed as several studies have noted, the very idea of the type of workers required in the present day information society can be traced back to military developments in World War II. The Applied Psychological Panel of the National Defense Research Committee stated that "man-machine is the fighting unit, not man

alone, not machine alone." It was the Air Force that shaped the concept of a weapon system that incorporated the very new idea of a new species: the man-machine system. Operators, viewed as components within these vast weapon systems came to be viewed as decision makers, problem solvers, and information processors. They were, in other words, human technologies embedded with a vast technological information system.<sup>12</sup>

Training, too, took on a new face during the 1950s. Rather than focusing on just technical training, corporate trainers began focusing on interpersonal skills training. This "human relations" training fit quite well with the newly emerged personnel function. With unions removed from personnel decisions, corporations were faced with the task of managing and controlling the workforce. Human relations training with its emphasis on the behavioral sciences became an important vehicle for finding mechanisms to control the activities on the shop floor. Skill in this approach, was secondary to process. How to motivate workers became the dominant issue. Human relations training reached its height with the emergence of human capital theory.

That human capital theory should come to serve as reigning ideology for corporate education comes as no surprise. Generally accepted as having been popularized by (although the ideas have been around much longer) Schultz at the 1960 meeting of the American Economic Association, human capital theory basically holds that long-term benefits or rate of return from an individual's investment in education are superior to other forms of investment. Moreover, according to this theory, education increases the skills and hence the productivity of the workforce.

Human capital theory has had a curious history over the last thirty years. Since the 1970s the theory has been under severe and almost constant attack. In fact, there is little evidence that increased education leads directly to increased productivity and economic growth. While education may be a factor in economic growth, it is far from the most important one.<sup>13\*</sup>

If the economic rationale for human capital theory does not hold up under close scrutiny, the entire rationale for HRD becomes suspect. What HRD and indeed, the closely allied concept of total quality management does provide is for management to provide even more intrusive measures of control. With unions now playing a significantly less important role, HRD with its emphasis on learning to learn and team-building approaches leaves little room for workers to develop collective action. The end goal is to create a mobile workforce, able to "problem-solve" with sophisticated "people" skills, but with few real technical skills—the very definition of an unskilled workforce.<sup>14\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This is not to suggest that HRD has not been subject to severe critique within adult education. See, for example, Mechtilid U. Hart, *Working and Educating for Life* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992); Michael Collins, *Adult Education as Vocation* (London and New York, 1991) for example. However, it is to suggest that the context and reasons for its emergence have not been adequately explored.

<sup>2</sup> Shirley Jacobson, "Early Human Resource Development Work: Its Impact on Present-Day Practitioners," In *Proceedings of the 32nd Annual Adult Education Research Conference*, (University of Oklahoma, 1992), 139-144; Vicki Ann Mech, "Human Resource Development in the United States from 1630-1980" (Doctoral Dissertation, Indiana University, 1984); Vincent A. Miller, "The History

of Training," in *Training and Development Handbook*, edited by Robert L. Craig, (New York: MacGraw-Hill), 3rd. Edition, 1987), 3-18; "The Coming of Age of Workplace Learning: A Time Line," *Training & Development* ( May 1994), S5-S11.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Steinmetz, quoted in Jeanette S. Baker, "An Analysis of Degree Programs Offered by Selected Industrial Corporations," (Doctoral dissertation, University of Arizona, 1983).

<sup>4</sup> Colleen A. Moore, "Corporation Schools; 1900-1930, ERIC document ED 226 138; Nell P. Eurich, *Corporate Classrooms: The Learning Business* (Carnegie Foundation Report, 1985)

<sup>5</sup> Mech, *Human Resource Development*; Cloyd S. Steinmentz, "The Evolution of Training," in *Training and Development Handbook*, edited by Robert L. Craig, (New York: MacGraw-Hill, 1967), 1-15;

<sup>6</sup> John Brophy, *A Miner's Life*, ed. J.O.P. Hall ((Madison, 1964), 44.

<sup>7</sup> H.L. Morris, *The Plight of the Bituminous Coals Miner*, Philadelphia, 1934), 28.

<sup>8</sup> Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974), 428ff.

<sup>9</sup> J.B.S. Hardman, "The State of the Movement," in J.B.S. Hardman and Maurice F. Neufeld eds., *The House of Labor* (New York, 1951), 53.

<sup>10</sup> The literature on labor during and after World War II is vast. Some important sources include David Brody, *Workers in Twentieth Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); idem., *In Labor's Cause* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Daniel Nelson, *Workers and Managers* (Madison, WI, 1975); Sanford Jacoby, *Employing Bureaucracy: Managers, Workers, and the Transformation of Work in American Industry, 1900 -1945* (New York, 1985); David Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor* (New York, 1987).

<sup>11</sup> Quotations in Brody, *Workers*, 181.

<sup>12</sup> See M.R. Smith ed., *Military Enterprise and Technological Change* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1985); John Tirman, *The Militarization of High Technology* (Cambridge, Mass., Ballinger, 1984; Les Levidov and Kevin Robbins, eds., *Cyborg Worlds: The Military Information Society* (New York: Free Association Press, 1989).

<sup>13</sup> For an exemplary critique of the literature on human resource development from the perspective of adult education, see Ian Baptiste, *Educating Politically: In Pursuit of Social Equality* (Doctoral dissertation, Northern Illinois University, 1994), especially chapters 2 and 3. See also Kjell Rubenson, "Human Resource Development: A Historical Perspective," in *Developing Resourceful Humans*, edited by Lynn Elen Burton (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 3-30. For an early popular critique see Ivar Berg, *Education and Jobs: The Great Training Robbery* (New York, 1979). The assumptions and implications of human capital theory/HRD are summed up in Anthony Carnevale et al *Workplace Basicss* (Washington: ASTD, 1988). (Carnevale is the chief economist for ASTD.

<sup>14</sup> Some early critiques include Donald M. Weiss, *Empty Promises* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987); Guillermo J. Grenier, *Inhuman Relations* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988); Harvie Ramsay, "Cycles of Control: Workers Participation in Historical Perspective," *Sociology* 11 (September, 1977), 27-57.

## **Spaces for Democracy: Researching the Social Learning Process**

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Critical adult educators and a number of social theorists view social learning processes as a means of contributing to the democratization of civil society. The qualitative research project discussed in this paper examines these processes within a community development oriented women's organization.

### **Introduction**

Warnings ring out across the critical adult education community about the impending demise of a socially conscious form of adult education; one that fosters critique and the development of democratic capacities necessary for social change. Adult education of this genre occurs within the cultural field, that realm that includes the family, voluntary associations and public communication. This sphere is known as civil society. Cohen and Arato (1992) define it as follows:

...a sphere of social interaction between economy and state, composed above all of the intimate sphere (especially the family), the sphere of associations (especially voluntary associations), social movements, and forms of public communication. Modern civil society is created through forms of self-constitution and self-mobilization. (p. ix)

It is here that the development of democratic capacities takes place, that collective solutions to problems are sought and collective opposition to oppression can occur.

Civil society is that space that provides the opportunities for people to come together and define themselves, their beliefs and values. It is, however, being intruded upon by the economic and political systems, a phenomenon that Habermas (1984) refers to as the "colonization of the lifeworld." As this continues, identities are derived more and more from outside of the lived experiences of individuals, outside of the realm of opinion and possibility that the interaction with others accords.

The warnings within the critical adult education community correspond with this closure of spaces for democracy within civil society. Briton and Plumb (1993), and Plumb (1994) outline the effects of these intrusions into the lifeworld, couching their understanding of these encroachments within postmodernity. They warn of the commodification of the cultural field, and by implication adult education. Based on the pleasure principle, individuals become pre-occupied with themselves, isolating people from one another. This individualized focus prohibits meaningful interaction, and de-emphasizes the need for reflection and dialogue, key components of the social learning process.

This dark prognosis of adult education is met with calls for an examination of spaces within civil society, specifically social movements, as potential learning sites for critical adult education (Welton, 1993; Finger, 1989). Hart (1985, 1990, 1992) contributes in her examination of the potential of the feminist movement as a location for emancipatory education. Lovett (1988) also provokes thought in this direction with discussions on contemporary social movements and their relationships with adult education.



Welton (in press) conceives of a social learning paradigm, not just a process, which would replace the individualized andragogical model that he claims has become obsolete as an orienting notion for adult education. He suggests that a social learning paradigm would encompass all aspects of adult education, and would provide for the understanding of adult education's role within the cultural field and in promoting change. Welton (in press) reflects that those working within the various social sciences are becoming increasingly interested with learning and its potential in the social change process. The individualized focus of mainstream adult education cannot meet their needs for understanding social learning processes, so it is up to critical adult educators to enter the debate and provide some direction.

Cohen and Arato (1992) are two social theorists who have expressed interest in social learning. Drawing from Habermas, they have conceived a theory of civil society that is a separate sphere from both the state and the economic systems. They build upon Habermas's system/lifeworld split in demonstrating how civil society exists, and they accept his idea of critique as the means of further democratizing this sphere. This occurs within those spaces that resist the influences of the economic and political systems, namely social movements. In developing the relationship that social movements have with civil society, their theory incorporates notions of both resource mobilization and collective identity theories within the social movement literature. Ultimately their ideas of civil society, and of social movements as spaces for the development of democratic capacities, correspond with critical adult educators working towards the same ends.

As both adult educators and theorists of civil society struggle to understand how to defend and democratize the cultural sphere, it is relevant to explore social learning processes within those spaces where democratic skills are presently being developed. This research project examines the social learning processes within a community development oriented women's collective.

### **Research Methods**

The research project is a qualitative ethnographic case study of a non profit organization which provides a space for women dealing with unemployment, poverty, family violence, and language and settlement issues to collectively address their concerns. I was involved with the group for nine months, conducting interviews, doing observations of group meetings, and analyzing organizational documents and literature in attempting to identify the social learning processes. The constant comparative method was employed in the data analysis. Although the organization offers a number of different programs, from parenting to crafts to collective kitchens, the main focus of the study was on the Personal and Community Enrichment Program. Through the weekly group educational experiences, the informal support from both staff and other women within the organization, as well as the work experience that they engage in, the women involved in this program are able to come to a better understanding of personal and community issues. They are then able to take action on these concerns.

### **Findings**

Three themes emerged from the research on social learning processes. They include the interplay between the structure and process of social learning, the development of a collective identity, and support within the collective. Each theme provides a piece of the total picture of how social learning occurs in the organization.

### **The interplay between structure and process in social learning**

This theme includes first, the dialectical process of reflection and action within the collective, and second, the structure that supports it.

The overall process of social learning occurs for most women as that which Habermas (1984) describes in his theory of communicative action. The dialectical process incorporates the elements of intersubjective dialogue, critical reflection and action. Through engagement in these activities, the women are able to address individual, collective and community issues. For instance, the main issue for most women within the collective is that of isolation which is caused by lack of confidence engendered by abuse, cultural and language barriers, the stigma and humiliation of poverty, or the dependency created through multi-generational reliance on the social support system. Intersubjective dialogue allows them to express their experiences and understandings of isolation in a safe environment. Through critical reflection they question the assumptions they hold about their perceptions of the issues. This reflective practice is illustrated through one woman's new understanding about abuse: "Not all guys are that way, mean and beat up their wives and punch you when you are eight months pregnant." Once they see the contradictions within their world views and realize the reasons for their isolation, they are able to take action to overcome them. The collective does this in a number of ways, one of which is to reach out to other women within the community in similar circumstances. Another is to address some of the barriers within the community that keep women isolated. In the past the collective has worked toward creating safe lighting within the neighbourhood, as well as play and child care facilities for their children. Essentially the social learning process of intersubjective dialogue, critical reflection and action provides them with the opportunities to develop the democratic capacities for participation as contributing citizens.

The second component of the interplay theme is the structure that both results from and fosters the dialectical process discussed above. As the collective is an educationally based organization, the structure consists of programs that provide women with opportunities to participate in education for personal and social change. For instance, there are practical programs on goal setting, parenting, or learning to use a sewing machine. There are also opportunities to become involved in the community and with other social action organizations. Some of the skills that the women gain are not necessarily those that would allow them to compete in the work world, but rather they build upon the skills that can be integrated with their efforts to care for their families. Food and craft co-ops, collective kitchens, and other collective financial ventures provide women with the means to deal with the circumstances in which they find themselves. These stand in sharp contradiction to the culture of individualism within society and promote an understanding of the power of a collective.

There is continual interplay between the structure and the process of social learning. The programs are derived from the process of women identifying and expressing their needs and issues. As the structure provides for these needs, the programs furnish a space for the continuation of reflection and action. Since the structure comes out of a process of critique it is also designed from a critical perspective in that the programs provide women with skills that are appropriate to them, but may be considered alternative to mainstream society.

### **Development of a collective identity**

The learning processes and developmental activities that the women experience are couched in a notion of collectivity. Escaping the isolation that so many experience means introducing them to the joys and benefits of interaction with others and a sense of community or collectivity is fostered within the group. The fact that the organization functions "alternatively" to other groups or programs, to other ways of doing things, is reinforced through a number of methods. The first is by means of comparisons to other individuals, programs or organizations. "When we do something, how is it different from someone off the street doing it?" There is continual reinforcement of the process of identifying issues and taking action on them both individually and collectively. The holistic approach to learning that they advocate stands in contrast to those short term instrumental programs that emphasize only specific skill development.

The second method involves identifying how the group functions. This includes the collective development of group guidelines and expectations. Although the staff plays a leadership role in facilitating the development of these guidelines it is the members who establish them and have the greatest responsibility for modeling them for new members. Essentially these expectations are based on respect and tolerance for difference. Women learn to deal with the internal conflicts that arise, which can have a detrimental affect on the functioning of the group.

The collective offers the women respite from the labels that they receive from society. Although they express desires to improve their situations, they can feel that what they are doing now for themselves and their families is respected and valued. Despite the humiliation that they feel from by being put down by the system and society at large, the collective provides them with a space to redefine their identities, and then to assist others caught up in the stigmatization process to overcome it. The notion of collective identity is combined with action to counteract the effects of society's systems and degradation of women. This runs parallel with Touraine (1981) who maintains that social movements require both the identity component as well as attacks upon the sociopolitical system in order to be effective. These attacks by the collective take the form of communicating the issues to other groups and individuals, engaging with other organizations dedicated to social change, as well as working with those in the state bureaucracies to advocate for changes to strict prescriptive funding requirements.

### **Support within the collective**

The most salient element of the social learning process is that of the support that the group offers to individuals. This takes various forms, from open acceptance of each member, to financial support. Emotional support, however, is the mainstay for most. The collective provides a safe place for women to escape and overcome the difficulties that they face. Feeling accepted and supported allows for intersubjectivity to occur within the group. Inclusion is part of the culture of the organization. Women learn to be tolerant of even the most trying of individuals, understanding that each makes some sort of contribution. Time and time again the women express how this support serves as a motivator for action. Support is a prerequisite to both the actual processes of reflection and action, as well as for the development of a collective identity. Hart (1992) suggests that:

From the perspective of a productive educational process, validating subjective experience and engaging in a

relationship of empathy are not simply abstract moral imperatives, but structural requirements for the educational process to be successful... (p. 194)

This notion of support also corresponds with Thompson's (1988) understanding of the life-sustaining relationships that women find with each other in feminist education and meetings.

### Summary

The intention of this case study was to explore the nature of social learning processes within a women's collective. Given the concern by both critical adult educators and social theorists with social learning, and Welton's (in press) suggestion of a social learning paradigm, it seems appropriate to understand more about these processes within those organizations or movements that provide space for the development of democratic capacities. The findings from the research suggest that there are three components to the social learning process. They are the interplay between structure and process in social learning, the development of a collective identity, and support within the collective. The first theme demonstrates how the element of critique is incorporated within the collective, and how it becomes inherent within both the process and structure of social learning. Development of a collective identity is important in fostering the solidarity necessary in social action. As people realize the benefits of working and learning together, they not only overcome the stigma of the labels that society attaches to them, but they also overcome the stigma associated with collectivity in our individualistic society. The support within the collective, the third theme, is a necessary element for both of the first themes to occur. Together these themes constitute the framework for understanding the social learning process within this organization.

Social movements have been described as the site for social learning to occur. The women's collective in this case study falls within not only the community development model that it is predicated on, but also within the auspices of the feminist movement. Cohen and Arato (1992), define civil society as composed of the family, voluntary associations, public communication, as well as social movements. It is important for critical adult educators to gain an understanding of how social learning and the development of democratic capacities occurs not only within the various pockets of resistance that constitute social movements, but the other areas of this sphere as well. With a broader understanding of the complexities of social learning throughout civil society, critical adult educators will be better prepared to contribute to the defense of these spaces for democracy, as well as to a socially conscious form of adult education.

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## Power and Program Planning In a Community-Based Context

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Recent theorizing in program planning focuses on the critical perspective which examines contextual factors and power relationships. The research question here asks, to what extent do power relationships affect the program planning process in Candora, a community-based organization?

Sork and Caffarella (1989) analyzed program planning theories and models from the last forty years, and determined that there were six elements common to all of them: 1) scan the environment; 2) run a needs assessment; 3) develop an administrative plan; 4) develop an instructional plan; 5) implement the program; 6) evaluate the program. They also determined, however, that little is known about how planners deal with contextual factors. In this connection Cervero and Wilson (1994, p. 6) investigated the "political richness, ethical dilemmas, and practical judgments of planning practice." They concluded that each planning situation is affected by the **interests** that each party brings to the exercise, the **power relationships** that exist within it, and how the program planner **negotiates** these interests and power relationships in developing the program. They suggest that the planner should be promoting a democratic ethos in the planning situation. They note the role of bounded rationality (Forester, 1989) in the strategies that planners could use in various situations.

The case study that follows will use this theoretical framework, but extend Cervero and Wilson's work into a community-based context. In such settings, community programmers usually use Freire's planning model; however, that model does not explain how negotiation occurs in collectivity, nor does it highlight the dilemmas that the leaders encounter when attempting to practice democracy in community. The research reported here addresses these problems. Specifically, it seeks to illuminate processes that are very important in contemporary society: relationship building, listening effectively, critiquing power structures, and acting in concert on shared goals.

### Candora: A Case Study

Candora is a non-profit organization that was originally established as part of the consumer education project of Grant MacEwan Community College and Edmonton Community and Family Services. Candora uses a development model that has the community determining its future rather than outside experts. There is a coordinator for the Candora project, but the residents of the community are the community facilitators and determine the programs that are offered.

Candora operates in northeast Edmonton, in communities built in the 1970s as low income housing. Since then the developers and the municipality have not maintained the complexes, and they have fallen into disarray. Their decreased value has made them affordable to those on social assistance and the working poor and, as these people are not traditionally ones to give voice to their conditions in any organized manner, conditions have continued to decline. Single parent families, primarily headed by women, make up a large portion of the communities. Many are

isolated, without family or friends in the area, and have low commitment to the community.

Candora provides a space for these people to come together, to meet, to identify, and to take action on some of the problems they are experiencing, such as unemployment, poverty, family violence, and parenting and child care concerns. Candora also provides immigrant residents with a place to address their language and settlement concerns.

### **Research methods**

To determine how program planning occurs within Candora, we interviewed a group as well as individuals. The group comprised about 20 individuals while three staff members and one participant were interviewed. One of the researchers took part in a staff planning day. The group interview was held first and subsequent individual interviews were guided by the following questions.

1. What are the interests that each of the participants in the group, the staff, and the organizations (such as funders) outside of Candora bring to the group and how does that affect program planning?
2. What are the power relationships within and outside of Candora that affect the way programs are planned?
3. How are the interests and power relationships negotiated in the program planning process?

Data analysis was conducted by a computer qualitative research program called Pro File which facilitated the placing of units of analysis into themes.

### **Findings**

The first part of the findings include the various interests, power relationships, and negotiation found in the Candora context. The second part discusses the emergent themes that highlight the ways Candora women practice program planning.

Interests ranged from personal self-interests to public self-interests (Scott, 1991). Specifically, the personal self-interests included those needs for connection with others to talk about personal crises, or to overcome loneliness. As the women became involved in the Candora group process, their interests shifted from personal to public. Isolated, new to the city, fearful of old relationships, children in tow, the women gradually get up "enough nerve to come to Candora." As one participant says, "This place is important for me and everybody. It a place for coming and for stay three or four hours. After you go here, you go clean." As one woman put it, "Candora is my umbligo." Umbligo in Spanish means umbilical cord, a cord which connects a new unborn baby to a nurturant mother. Thus, metaphorically, the Candora women are being birthed, and nurtured through a cord of life found in the group. Through this cord, personal interests, in time, are liberated from a concern for only themselves as individuals to a concern for all the women in like circumstances, public interests. Their interests become broader, beyond just the individual, to include interests in family violence and poverty in society.

The senior staff also expressed interests but these were more philosophically and altruistically based. They adhere to the belief in the ability of the women to define their own needs and to solve their own problems and issues. As one states, "it's almost like working yourself out of a job, which never happens, but it is in that kind of an intent that the community finds its own potential and dynamic." The

staff must have a vision for what's possible and a commitment to the daily life in community on a long term basis. This prevents them from being prescriptive, a factor that is highly important in the program planning process for them. It becomes relational, interconnected, while the planning process is facilitated, not "dictated" by the staff.

Funders, also, have interests that affect the programs at Candora. Funders, particularly large bureaucracies, often are prescriptive with rigid guidelines. It is in their interest to maintain the efficiency and accountability of the programs that they fund. Funders interests are often quite different from the program interests within Candora. For instance, as one woman states it, "...we try to be responsive, fluid, flexible, yet we are hearing strategic planning, long term goals, accountability. It puts us in some kind of jeopardy because how can we honour the strengths here and be responsive to the women and children if we are being dictated to by people who say that you will use their money in a certain way."

### **Power Relationships**

Power relationships occur both from outside of the group, as well as within. The major external power relationships occur with the funders. Because of Candora's philosophy of "people before programs," the organization has a bottom line that they are not willing to step over in compromising their principles for the sake of funding. By adhering closely to their principles of what was best for the participants and giving voice to these principles continually, they jeopardize funding for programs. The dilemma of when to compromise their principles in the face of legitimate interests threatens Candora's security and uniqueness.

Staff members have certain power over their respective areas, but they make every attempt to ensure equality within the group. In terms of program planning, although staff may introduce an idea for a program that they feel is appropriate, the decision is still up to the women, who may or may not go along with these ideas. Still, the staff have power in that they decide on what type of funding to apply for, or what issues they are aware of to bring to the group. Certainly there is leadership here and staff must constantly be aware of their motives.

Power relationships that emerge and cause conflicts within the group are handled through dialogue with the group as a whole. Power relationships within the organization can be fragmenting, and the group attempts to prevent this from occurring through a culture of respect and tolerance for everyone.

### **Negotiation**

With a variety of interests and power relationships occurring within the group at any given time, the task of negotiating these is primarily up to the Coordinator, who serves as the facilitator of program planning. Certainly negotiations between the interests of the women in the collective, the staff interests and those of the funders can create dilemmas where compromise must occur or funding is in jeopardy.

Negotiating between interests of participants is another part of the process. The needs of the majority are given the priority while individual voices are addressed to the best of the collective's ability. Some may be referred to other programs or agencies that are able to handle specific needs more fully. Because of the collective nature of the group, there is a sense of equality that becomes apparent in the negotiation process. "There is freedom to give negative feedback without fear of



reprisal of some sort... There is the freedom to negotiate without fear; there isn't the fear of losing a job or that you are going to be alienated."

### **Emergent Themes in Candora's Program Planning**

Program planners must be democratically oriented, using their power within the context to attempt to even out relationships (legitimate interests) within the negotiation process. While Candora deviates from institutionally based program planning in that it is a grassroots community-based organization, there are constraints within the social context in which planners find themselves. Although this can be demonstrated in the descriptive analysis of interests, power relationships and negotiation, it is in the emergence of three themes in the data that shows the significant effects on the program planning process in a collective. Leveling power influences is the dominant theme, while the other two, empowerment for self-sufficiency and self-confidence, and advocating for the interests of women can almost be considered sub-themes.

Leveling the power influences suggests that power is consciously acknowledged by the staff of Candora, who attempt to equalize the playing field within all contexts. Thus, the staff of Candora envision the structure of the organization as being circular or flat. This creates an ambiguous or messy situation for the Coordinator who often struggles to define her role while juggling the various interests involved. Leveling power relationships involves negotiating with legitimate interests both inside and outside of Candora. The collective is quite willing to garner support from their board members, as well as local and provincial politicians if their funding is truly in danger as they deal with difficult funding agencies.

Leveling power is probably more evident within the collective and its day to day operations than with the conflicts with outside agencies. One way to equalize power, and to demonstrate to the women of Candora that they are not "lesser people," is to invite visitors to sit anywhere around the table when they come to Candora. Visitors are not given preferential treatment. This method provides for an atmosphere where the women can sit at the same table with authority figures and feel that they are on equal footing. Ultimately this feeling of collectivity provides the women with a sense of power that builds their individual confidences in counteracting power in their own lives.

The second theme is empowerment for self-sufficiency and self-confidence. Through the experience of being involved in a group that promotes a culture of equalizing power relationships, women are given the skills to undertake this kind of activity for themselves. The fact that their voices are respected within the group can be a new experience for many of them, and give them the confidence and personal power to overcome some of the obstacles (like abuse) that have kept them in a dependent state.

Respect and dignity are the key components of Candora, where people come together to help people help themselves. The notion of empowerment is inherent in everything that they do, and as people find power within the collective, they are able to overcome the sense of isolation that had been holding them back from confronting the difficulties that they faced. They build up their self confidence through being able to give voice to their opinions and being able to guide the direction of programs. Self-confidence then builds their abilities to escape the cycle of dependency and to become self sufficient. This type of empowerment, though, is not individualistic, as there is a

strong sense of community. Instead, it is a notion of independence through interdependence.

Advocating for the interests of women is the third theme, and during the program planning phase, particularly with outside agencies, there is a continual effort on the part of the staff to ensure that the interests and needs of the women are communicated. The problems that these women encounter are created by the patriarchal society in which they live. Their reliance on patriarchal systems that create a cycle of dependency, and the issues such as family violence and child care that they deal with on a daily basis are not solely women's problems, but are society's. The education of government and agency representatives as to alternative methods for breaking the cycle of dependency, is a continual process. Many bureaucrats may not be willing to understand that they might be part of the problem, nor would they be willing to sustain a "messy" ongoing process that seems to have no end-point.

### **Theoretical Analysis**

A program planner needs to be democratic in orientation and to become aware of her agency in order to deal with the structures that affect the program plan. From the research completed it is evident that in community-based programs, the program planner is much more openly democratic than in the examples that Cervero and Wilson (1994) provide. The lack of direct constraining elements on the organization contributes to the ability of the program planner to undertake a democratic role. There is less concern about the political positioning of the Coordinator, although the attempts to stand up to power brokers could have more of an overall effect on the organization than on the individual program planners in institutional examples. A Coordinator who advocates for too dramatic changes is likely to cause funders to stop supporting the program, thus effecting her job as well as the rest of the organization. Despite this, there appears to be more room to move for the democratically oriented program planner in community based organizations as the power comes from the grass roots.

Cervero and Wilson (1994) offer a model for understanding the strategies that program planners use in negotiating interests and power relationships. They provide a four quadrant model that draws upon the rationality of the program planners based on the constraining features of the program planning situation. The vertical axis of this model consists of the source of the power relations which could be either socially ad hoc or socially systematic. The first of these means that the program planning situation is conducted on an ad hoc basis, where stakeholders come together for one specific program planning exercise. Socially systematic suggests that that the process is on-going and occurs within an institutionalized atmosphere. The horizontal axis consists of the relations among the legitimate interests, and these can be either consensual or conflictual. For each quadrant, the program planner must use a specific strategy based on a rational decision, that will be appropriate for the particular constraints within each situation. When planners attempt to plan democratically in situations marked by conflicting interests and asymmetrical relationships of power, as in the case of Candora, "they need to use strategies that will give all legitimate actors an equivalent voice in constructing the program" (1994, p. 129).

Although all four strategies are used in Candora, because of the nature of the philosophy of the organization, they appear to be involved in quadrant four, and use

the strategy of counteracting power to a much greater extent. This strategy involves "mobilizing groups of people to counter the effects of established interests. This may take a variety of forms, from providing information to potentially affected groups to active interventions to bring all affected groups into the process" (p. 135). Bounded rationality strategy 3, bargaining in the face of pluralist conflict, is also used, but to a lesser degree, because the organization is not willing "to prostitute themselves for the sake of funding."

### Summary

In explicating the power relationships that affect a program planning process in a critically oriented context, this research demonstrates the possibility of democratic program planning. It is in these places that learners have more say in program planning and development than in other situations. The prescriptive and authoritarian nature of much program planning is resisted in these contexts. It is possible to be critical in collectives because dialogue, with all legitimate interests involved, reveals personal and public delusion about the way society structures itself. Power relationships are leveled in collectives that foster a democratic and participatory process. Conflict is not seen as a negative, but rather as an inevitable factor in the planning process. It draws out the perceived and real interests and power relationships of those involved in the process and must be encountered to have a truly democratic program planning process.

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## **The Significance of Including The Lived Experiences of African Americans in Adult Basic Education Curriculum and Planning**

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**Abstract:** The need to connect education and learning to the "lived experience" of adults has been discussed as a goal within adult education. One hundred fifty three interviews were conducted with African American adult students, administrators, and educators in the state of California. This study suggests that African Americans will participate and do participate in those programs that connect with their culture and life stories -- their lived experiences.

### **Introduction**

African Americans and other involuntary as well as voluntary Americans<sup>1</sup>, living in the United States receive multifarious messages about the relationship between education and equitable employment. One assumes that if one receives an equal and equitable chance academically, then one should succeed in obtaining comparable employment or sufficient employment to care for one's self and/or one's family. However, that is not always the case. More often than not, people end up in jobs that do not match their expected goals, given what they understand about education and work. Adult basic education (ABE) funding agents and policy makers are given the arduous task of providing educational services that provide African Americans and English as a Second Language (ESL) students with educational services that can lead to work. While most students attending literacy or ESL programs come because they want to gain employment, some, come for other reasons. Just why people do or do not attend literacy programs is the focus of this study. Moreover, what can these programs do to encourage African American participation? While these questions have import for voluntary and involuntary Americans, the focus of this study is on California's African American adult population.

Historically, African Americans have actively engaged in the pursuit of lifelong learning events (Ihle, 1990; Morton, 1991; Rachal, 1986). African Americans have valued education, as evidenced by the slaves who risked their lives to learn how to read. In particular, they have struggled to obtain an education, as well as jobs that provide them with equal and equitable pay for services rendered. Legislation has been sought and obtained that would provide them access and equity in both the educational mainstream and workforce. Yet, in spite of this, the gains of African Americans in the educational system, as well as the workforce are minimal.

African Americans represent 11% of the total population in the United States. In comparison, European Americans represent 76%, while Latino and Asian/Pacific Islanders represent 10% and 2% respectively. In California 61% are European American, 7% African American, 25% Latino and 6% are Asian/Pacific Islander. The average years in school for African Americans nationwide is 11.6. In comparison European Americans remain in school for 12.8 years, Asians or Pacific Islanders 13.0, and Native Americans or Alaskan Natives 11.7 years. The only group with less years in school than African Americans was Latinos, who remain in school on average for 10.6 years.



Even though California enrolls the largest number of Adult Basic Education students in the nation, they rank 40th among those states enrolling African Americans by proportion to the total population in need of basic skills (Valentine and James, 1993). According to a review of the 1990 census data compiled by Valentine and James, California reported that 23.8% of its total population aged 25 and over did not have a high school diploma. African Americans represent 6.8% of the total population in the state, and 24.4 % (310, 401) of the total number of citizens that do not have a high school diploma. Of that 24.4% needing a high school diploma, 7.0% have been targeted by the state to receive adult education services. Valentine and James gave California an equity rating of -2.9.<sup>2</sup> Of the 7.0% targeted, California serves only 5.0% of the African Americans in need of a high school diploma. While California shows a disproportionately lower number of African Americans participating in ABE programs, other states are showing a disproportionately higher rate of enrollment by African Americans in their programs. This study has import for a number of states seeking ways to increase their services to people of color. They concluded:

While the census data show that a large number of African American adults lack a diploma, the data also reveal that African Americans are, in a sense, disproportionately represented among those adults enrolled in ABE programs. The simplest explanation would be that external forces (e.g. employers or AFDC) or maturity has compelled these individuals to complete their education.

**Purpose** The intent of this study was to determine what factors contribute or prevent African American adults participation in traditional and non-traditional Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs in California. While the study examined four basic assumptions held by California policy makers, administrators, and teachers about African Americans participation in adult education activities, this report will only address the findings concerning the significance of including African Americans lived experiences in the curriculum as a way to increase participation among this population.

**Methodology** Qualitative methods employing the constant comparative method (Glasser and Strauss, 1967) and an Africentric<sup>3</sup> Feminist Epistemology (Hill-Collins, 1990) were used to gather, code, categorize and analyze interview data collected through focus group and individual discussions conducted throughout the state of California. Collins' method suggests that the "lived experience" is the connection between one's understanding of the communities and the worlds in which they live and operate. In effect, ones research is absolutely useless if there is no connection between the understanding we derive from it and the world experienced by our subjects. Hence, the methodology required by the Collins method allows us to connect our understanding of African American involvement with adult educational programs and the world in which African Americans live and operate.

A total of 153 interviews were conducted throughout the state of California with African American students, educators, and administrators. (see Table 1) These interviews were systematically collected through taped sessions conducted with one or more persons. These interviews were then transcribed for coding and analysis. Five research assistants were hired to assist in the collection and coding of the data.

Table 1 Ethnicity and Category of Participants					
Ethnicity/ Category	African American n	Asian	Latino	White	Total
Student	91	2	10	3	106
Administrator/ Teacher/ Counselor	36	5	2	4	47
Total	127	7	12	7	153

Twenty three adult education programs representing community - based organizations, adult schools, community colleges and correctional programs in 8 counties participated in this study. (See Table 2) The percentage of African Americans living in these areas ranged between 1% and 11% of the total population. Two stakeholders meetings, 16 focus groups, and 25 individual interviews were conducted by the Adult education research team between February 17 and July 23, 1994.

Table 2 Percentage of African American Households Household Demographic Data by County			
County	Population Size	African- American	Percentage
Alameda	795,158	85,370	11%
Contra Costa	544,709	25,273	5%
Los Angeles	4,954,935	350,723	7%
Orange	1,531,016	14,000	1%
Sacramento	711,882	32,344	4.5%
San Francisco	506,253	30,278	6%
San Mateo	433,917	11,573	3%
Santa Clara	920,722	19,020	2%

## Findings

Interviews conducted in this study revealed that when African Americans access adult education programs, they often encounter situational, institutional and dispositional barriers. These barriers negate their cultural realities and lived experiences. While these factors clearly inhibit participation, approximately 6% of the targeted 7% in California do participate. However, once they enter they often leave because of cultural barriers, personal or familial problems, institutional obstacles, and perceived lack of benefits. Those that continue to come, do so because they value education and they receive support from within and outside the institutions they are attending. Their lived experiences are acknowledged by the teachers, other students, and staff. Several themes arose in this study. Those that

relate specifically to the significance of including one's lived experience will be addressed here.

**Barriers to Participation** Self perception, economic pressures, peer pressure, racism, and internal and external environmental factors are barriers to African Americans participating in adult education programs. The "streets talk loud" and unless adult education offers a better alternative, the hard to reach and the hard to teach students will not persist (even when they would like to or when it's in their best interest to do so).

One student described the barriers that were encountered when an attempt was made to finish school:

Because it's hard to try to come to school and try to study and you know, like if you got a forty-eight hour notice at home on your phone bill, and you're not receiving any calls -- you can only call out. It's hard to do a test when you get that at home.

Teachers also acknowledged that institutional and situational barriers hindered their students progress:

It's just those environmental forces that people leave here feeling like, I really do want to make it. I do want to go to school. But as . . . states, going back down into those deadly grounds, which is home for them, what they, they just can't walk away from. They have to go back to reality. Their reality is drugs. There are people being killed daily, you know, and those are the factors that affect you for the rest of your life. So they have to deal with that, so we're not really looking at the whole picture. We're just looking at a little small portion of the pie. It's a good portion, but unless those other things are linked together, it's not going to work.

I work in an area where I know that the people that work here, some of them are not ready to deal with cultural differences, even though they say, "We're real fair." When I first came here, they would take the chairs and say, "Don't sit in this chair," or "Don't use this desk," and it hasn't changed. It hasn't changed. And, it needs to change. And when things like that change, I think you'll see a difference in our entire school population . . . when people are treated as equals instead of subordinates, okay.

This administrator concluded that institutional barriers began prior to the students attending the Adult Basic Education program:

A good number of students have had . . . negative experiences when they were in high school -- being in special education classes or being considered slow ones in class. They were, some, for . . . many of them did not fit in, didn't mix well, had negative experiences, teachers that they felt just didn't care or didn't back them up, or, a specific example is students who said that they didn't like going to class because what they would talk about was always something they didn't understand or didn't know about. They felt they had no input.

In spite of these barriers, many students do persist. They persist because they believe that education can offer them an opportunity for a better life.

**Value Education** Lack of participation in educational programs could mean that one does not value it, or sees no use for it in their daily lives. Even though African

Americans have struggled historically for the opportunity to obtain an education, a disproportionate number of them continue to go uneducated or under-educated. The participants in this study persist because they do value education. Moreover, even when they dropped out in the past, it wasn't because they did not value education, there were other factors.

Many return because they believe things will change, or have changed. Some have gotten "a new lease on life," while others believe that it is important to obtain an education for future generations -- their children. They also recognize that they have to start somewhere, often times at the bottom. But that's okay, as long as they believe they have a chance.

Adult students recognize that they may have to start from the bottom. Two students acknowledged this understanding:

Being a minority means you always have to start at the bottom, yes? Yet, when, when somebody with a college education comes to your area, and your employer sits and picks that person to add to his or her company, they're not going to start it from the lower, you know like you started, like you being a minority....

I discovered that even with finishing the reading and writing process it wasn't enough for me to get to the work force. So I started going to a more advanced adult training . . . I came back to adult school so I could get my diploma and I could go to college and get ahead.

Students, African Americans in particular, need to see that what they are doing in school is going to have some relevance to what they do in the workforce and at home. This means that while learning for learning's sake is good, it is not enough. Economic factors, family pressures and constraints, and environmental factors place significant pressures on these adults. The learning environment and the relationships established with teachers becomes another critical factor for African Americans enrolled or planning to enroll in ABE programs.

**Learning Environment** The learning environment includes the internal and external surroundings of the physical plant. It also includes the way teachers, staff and administrators, students, and counselors relate to one another. Personnel and financial resources are required to enhance the learning environment. A caring atmosphere is promoted between students, teachers, staff and administration. Communication and the oral tradition is an essential component.

Collins (1990) refers to this as the "call and the response." It is similar to the discourse constructed in the black church between the minister and the congregation. He speaks, or places the call and the congregation responds in turn with an "Amen" if they agree, and "Yes suh" if the minister has called the "proverbial" someone out. Students are allowed to question and to expect a response that acknowledges them and their culture. Establishing a relationship is important.

One student noted that the relationship established with teachers and other staff members helps one decide whether to stay or leave the program:

The staff members are excellent. I've also learned that people here basically treat each other, nine times out of ten, like a family. Everyone gives everybody support, a pat on the back. I find it to be a very, very good school. And I would recommend this school to my friend or my neighbor.



Teachers also acknowledged the importance of establishing a caring, yet forthright relationship with their students:

If you don't care about your teaching, then the student is not going to get it. And I think that that's in our population, what we find is people have been dealt with by so many people that don't care about them that as soon as they see yet another teacher coming in, trying to teach them something that they may or may not be interested in, they can pick up on . . . Well, he or she, they really don't give a damn about me. They're just marking time so that they can pick up their pay check. Then they, then they turn off.

You've got to be real, and you've got to be genuine.

Because we are a community based organization, a conscious effort has gone into . . . making sure that there are role models in key positions that represent the clientele we are covering.

Several administrators indicated that the physical environment and the atmosphere, were important:

I think within the community when it comes to people choosing that school, they see . . . the students coming out with smiles and a positive attitude. They hear about things that the school has to offer. They hear about classes, the patience that the teachers have. A lot of these things go out of the school and go into the community. And people listen.

Quite frankly this is a very nice place to be, it is a very supportive environment. It's one that gives people the opportunity to socially interact in a non-threatening non-hostile environment. In this area alone there are over forty gangs.

The last uprising, the Rodney King thing, and all the people were rushing out, not one single piece of graffiti, not one single window, nothing, the place was not touched. That tells you that the people have some kind of feeling of ownership. Look at the school . . . the effect that this facility had on this area was greatly underestimated, because prior to this being built, it was thought that it would take two or three years to reach capacity. And heck, in two or three weeks, you couldn't get in the parking lot.

The majority of the teachers are of European descent. And that's reflective of society, and that's reflective of racism; that we end up with more teachers who are European American than we do. When new positions do come open, we are very conscious of making sure that we send out that job description . . . to . . . communities of color.

The streets talk loud and adult educators cannot provide the answers alone. They must engage in collaborative efforts with each other, other community agencies, and foundations. They must work with local and state planners to create environments conducive for learning. Students must be able to identify and communicate with teachers in their own language. They need to feel like they matter (Schlossberg, Lynch, and Chickering, 1991). Mattering refers to "the beliefs people have, whether

right or wrong, that they matter to someone else, that they are the object of someone else's attention, and that others care about them and appreciate them."

(Schlossberg, Lynch, and Chickering, p. 21)

African Americans must be able to connect with the curriculum, the teachers, and the program's goals. Conversely, the program's goals, the curriculum, and the teachers must reflect an understanding of their students' realities.

## Conclusions

Over the last 11 years several studies have been conducted concerning participation (Darkenwald and Scanlan, 1984, Darkenwald and Gavin, 1987, Darkenwald, and Valentine, 1985, Darkenwald and Valentine, 1986, Fisher, J., 1986, Kopka and Peng, 1993). These studies suggest several reasons for participating or not participating in adult education programs. The most frequent reasons given for participating in adult education activities are to: 1) improve or up-grade one's skills; 2) get a degree or diploma; 3) set a better example for one's children; and, 4) just to feel good about one's self (Darkenwald and Valentine, 1986, Kopka and Peng, 1993)

Attention has also been given to why they do not participate. Internal and external factors (Darkenwald and Scanlan, 1984, Darkenwald and Valentine, 1985, Fisher, 1986) are given for non-participation. Internal factors given include: 1) motivation or disengagement; 2) a failure to see personal benefits; 3) lack of confidence in one's ability; 4) low personal priority; and 5) feelings of alienation and loneliness. External factors given include: 1) Family constraints; 2) work constraints; 3) time constraints; 4) course irrelevancy; 5) quality of instruction or, poor service.

While the factors given for participation and non-participation cross over race, gender and class issues, the impact these issues have on participation or non-participation have not been adequately addressed. The findings in this study, indicate that African American adults continue to attend adult education programs because:

- *they value education*
- *they receive support from within and outside of the institutions they are attending.*
- *their cultural realities - their lived experiences - are acknowledged by the teachers, other students, and staff.*
- *their lived experiences are acknowledged within the program goals and the curriculum.*

When the curriculum fails to reflect the cultural and historical realities of African American adults, their participation in ABE programs is adversely affected. Additional research should be conducted specifically aimed at this issue. Moreover, attention needs to be given to earlier educational influences (Quigley, 1992) and the lack of self-ethnic reflectors (Colin, III, 1989) in curriculum and program planning models. If California and other states intend to provide equal and equitable educational services to African Americans, the curriculum developed should and must begin to reflect their cultural and historical realities -- their lived experiences.

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<sup>1</sup>Gibson and Ogbu (1991) used the term "voluntary" to refer to Americans that arrived in this country by choice and those who were brought here by force as "involuntary." "Minority groups have been incorporated into their various societies either voluntarily or involuntarily. Those who have been incorporated voluntarily are immigrants....In contrast, nonimmigrant minorities, whom I

designate involuntary minorities, are people who were brought into their present society through slavery, conquest or colonization." (pg. 8 and 9)

<sup>2</sup>Valentine and James, As defined here, educational equity is determined by comparing the percentage of adult African Americans in a state's total population with the percentage of adult African Americans in the state's population lacking a diploma. In other words, if African Americans comprise 15% of a state's population, they should also comprise 15% of the population without a diploma. If they are over-represented in the state's diploma-less population, negative equity (inequity) results. In mathematical terms, equity is calculated by the following formula:  

$$\frac{(\% \text{ in total population}) - (\% \text{ in diploma-less population})}{(\% \text{ in total population})} \times 100$$

<sup>3</sup> Afrocentric, Africentric, or African Centered are interchangeable terms representing the concept categorizing a 'quality of thought and practice' which is rooted in the cultural image and interest of people of African ancestry and which represents and reflects the life experiences, history and traditions of people of African ancestry as the center of analyses. Afrocentricity, therein, represents the intellectual and philosophical foundations upon which people of African ancestry should create their own scientific and moral criterion for authenticating the reality of African human processes. It represents the core and fundamental quality of the 'Beingness' and 'Becoming' of people of African ancestry. In essence, Afrocentricity represents the fact that as human beings, people of African ancestry have the right and responsibility to 'center' themselves in their own subjective possibilities and potential and through the recentering process reproduce and refine the best of themselves." (Nobles, 1990).

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*\*A complete reference list will be distributed at AERC*

## **Beyond the Rhetoric: What do the Empirical Studies Say About Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory?**

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### **Abstract**

This literature review is an attempt to get beyond the theoretical rhetoric of Mezirow's transformative learning and investigate what the empirical studies have to say about a perspective transformation. The review finds much support for Mezirow's theory, but at the same time suggest a need to reconceptualize the process of a perspective transformation.

### **Introduction**

Since 1978 the theory of transformative learning, as defined by Jack Mezirow from his study of women returning to school, has stimulated much discussion in the field of adult education. Transformative learning is "defined as the social process of construing and appropriating a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience as a guide to action" (Mezirow, 1994, p. 222-223). The process of making meaning is shaped and circumscribed by meaning structures. It is the revision of meaning structures from experiences that is addressed by the theory of perspective transformation. Most of the discussion about Mezirow's theory has been a theoretical critique centering on issues of power, context, rationality, and adult development within a cultural and social perspective. There has been a real need to get beyond the theoretical rhetoric and explore how transformative learning holds up in practice. However, there has been a paucity of publications and little discussion about empirical explorations of transformative learning theory or related premises. Less than 10% of the 27 empirical studies identified in this review have ever been published in major journals, instead most remain in dissertation format or in limited conference proceedings. The purpose of this study was to conduct a critical review of empirical studies that have investigated transformative learning theory over the last 17 years.

### **The Review: Selection and Findings**

Finding the empirical studies for the review began with using search terms such as "Mezirow," "transformative learning," and "perspective transformation" on various educational databases (Dissertation Abstracts International and Educational Resources Index Clearinghouse). The actual decision-making process in selecting an empirical study for review was based on two criteria:

1. the study involved Mezirow's model of perspective transformation or a related component in its purpose, conceptual framework, and/or design of the study.
2. the study provided a methodology section that was clearly described, eliminating conceptual pieces from the review.

The review begins with an overview of the studies' common purposes and methodologies, followed by the most significant findings organized around shared components of transformative learning: disorienting dilemma, context, critical reflection, other ways of knowing, and a perspective transformation. Also identified are areas for additional research.



### *Purposes*

To understand the varying intent of these studies they were grouped based on commonalities of their purposes. It is important to note that not all these studies investigated exclusively Mezirow's transformative learning. A little over half included other theoretical models such that transformative learning was not the sole focus of the study. Five of the studies looked at transformative learning in context to social and community transformation from the perspective of individual and/or organizational change (Elias, 1993; Coffman, 1989; Group for Collaborative Inquiry, 1994; Scott, 1991; Turner, 1986). Four studies explored the application of transformative learning as a model for culture learning—the way we structure our knowledge of other cultures (Harper, 1993; Holt, 1994; Taylor, 1993, 1994; Whalley, 1994). Two studies explored how perspective transformation explains learning as the result of participating in group therapy (Egan, 1985; Williams, 1985). Five studies focused on particular components of the process of perspective transformation—critical reflection, context, and affective learning (Brooks, 1989; Boyd & Fales, 1983; Clark, 1991; D'Andrea, 1986; Sveinunggaard, 1993). Seven studies looked at the relationship of lifestyle and career changes among adults and transformative learning (Gehrels, 1984; Hunter, 1980; Laswell, 1994; Lytle, 1989; Morgan, 1987; Olson & Kleine, 1994; Schlesinger, 1983). Three studies looked at the process of fostering transformative learning in an educational setting (Cusack, 1990; Matusicky, 1982; Pierce, 1986). The remaining study looks at transformative learning in relationship to withdrawal experiences (Cochrane, 1981). These varying purposes illustrate the broad range of applicability of transformative learning. However, while many of the studies primary purposes were to investigate the process of transformative learning, only three of the studies focused on the fostering of transformative learning in an educational setting. At this point there has been little empirical verification from an ongoing perspective what actually promotes transformative learning in the classroom, such as the factors that contribute or inhibit the learning process, the roles of teacher and student, setting, classroom activities, and time.

### *Methodology*

All of the studies employed naturalistic research designs mostly involving semi-structured interviews of the participants and gathering data in retrospect of their transformative learning experience. Two cross-cultural studies employed unique designs, one an anthropological life history (Harper, 1994) and the other a content analysis of sojourner journals (Whalley, 1995). Two studies employed collaborative and participatory methods (Group for Collaborative Inquiry, 1994; Sveinunggaard, 1993) and one study used an ethnographic approach (Turner, 1986). Four studies included quantitative methods as well, with one study using the positivistic approach as its primary method (Lytle, 1989; Matusicky, 1982; Morgan, 1987; Williams, 1985). This positivistic design, an exploration of male spouse abusers' learning process in therapy, developed an instrument to operationalize a perspective transformation (Williams, 1985). Overall, most of these quantitative methods offered few significant statistical findings. Of the studies that explored the model of a perspective transformation most did so in the context of learning events (change in lifestyle, a cross-cultural experience, therapy, illness etc.). As a design issue, this involved identifying participants for study based on their participation in shared learning events. Only three studies identified participants based on criteria indicative of a particular component/outcome of transformative learning (Brooks, 1989; Clark,

1991; Sveinunggaard, 1993). There is a need for more research designs that involve the selection of participants based on criteria characteristic of transformative learning. This could lead to greater reliability of identification of the various components (critical reflection, perspective transformation, etc.). Furthermore, few studies, especially those prior to 1989 made a serious effort to critique previous empirical studies of Mezirow's theory. This lack of critical evaluation has led to a redundancy of research and a lack of in-depth exploration into the nature of particular components of a perspective transformation.

Few if any of the studies designed the selection of participants to ensure diverse perspectives (class, gender, race). Of the few studies that did attempt to offer a cultural balance among its participants, even fewer investigated the relationship of cultural differences in context to transformative learning. There is a significant need for designs that address cultural diversity exclusively and how differences play out in the transformative learning process. This review also reveals the need for research designs that investigate transformative learning from an ongoing and longitudinal perspective. Most studies have been carried out in retrospect, where participants reflected back on their transformative experience, as opposed to recording the learning experience as it was actually happening.

### *Disorienting Dilemma*

The catalyst and the first step of Mezirow's perspective transformation is a disorienting dilemma—an acute internal/external personal crisis (Mezirow, 1978). All the studies that explored the complete process of a perspective transformation concur, and some studies broaden the definition of a dilemma. Clark (1991) found not only a disorienting dilemma a trigger to transformative learning, but integrating circumstances as well. "This is an indefinite period in which the person consciously or unconsciously searches for something which is missing in their life; when they find this missing piece, the transformation process is catalyzed" (pp. 117-118). Scott (1991) identified two types of disequilibrium: external confrontation and internal disillusionment. However, there is a need for research in understanding why some disorienting dilemmas lead to a perspective transformation and others do not. What factors contribute and/or inhibit the triggering process? Why do some significant events such as death of a loved one or personal injury not always lead to a transformation, while seemingly minor events such as a brief encounter or a lecture do sometimes stimulate transformative learning? Elias (1993) offers some insight into these questions. He identified eight categories of common learning experiences that lead to a new perspective that support the values and capacities of leaders for social transformation, such as developing multiple intelligences, cultivating critical thinking, expressing one's voice and successfully confronting authority. Also, the base-line experience in his study among the women was confronting authority, and men was for their awareness of feelings. However, there is also a question whether a disorienting dilemma is the first stage of the transformative learning process. Historical and social context seems to be an influencing factor.

### *Context*

Context, sociocultural and personal factors, play an influencing role in the process of transformative learning (Clark, 1991; Sveinunggaard, 1994). It offers an explanation to what other studies have referred to as a state of readiness and why certain disorienting dilemmas or triggers lead to a personal transformation and others

do not. Personal factors are found in what is referred to by other studies as: a readiness for change (Hunter, 1980), the role of experience (Coffman, 1989), setting the stage (Taylor, 1994), and a predisposition for a transformative experience (Turner, 1986). Sociocultural factors are referred to in Scott (1991) as life histories, Elias (1993) as history and tradition and a legacy from childhood, and Schlesinger (1993) as the pre-transition stage. Schlesinger (1983) found that Jewish women entering the workforce, "felt that their changes had to be understood within the context of what their lives had been like before they began the entry process....their early married years provide clues as to why they approached the transition bridge" (p. 85). Olson and Kleine (1993) found that prior high school experience of rural mid-life college students influenced the nature of trigger events leading to college entry. Many questions about the role of context are still left unanswered, such as can contextual influences be overcome by participants? Is it possible to predict or plan transformative learning based upon ongoing personal or sociohistorical factors? What is the relationship of participants of similar background (historical, cultural, personal, and familial) and their pattern of transformational learning?

### *Critical Reflection*

Mezirow (1990) states that "by far the most significant learning experiences in adulthood involve critical reflection—reassessing the way we have posed problems and reassessing our own orientation to perceiving, knowing, believing, feeling, and acting" (p. 13). Most of the studies that explored critical reflection concur with Mezirow on one level, that it is important to transformative learning, such as was found in Williams' (1985) study of spouse abuse therapy where men who had the greatest increase in the use of reasoning tactics also demonstrated the greatest change toward lessening of physically abusive behavior. However on another level several studies find critical reflection granted too much importance in a perspective transformation, a process too rationally driven. Scott (1991) concurs with Brooks (1989) who found in a study about critical reflection and organizational change that "critically reflective learning processes consist of more than just the critical thought strategies generally thought to comprise them" (p. 175). It is not just rationally based, but relies on intuition, other ways of knowing, and empathy. Morgan (1980) and Coffman (1989) found that critical reflection can only begin once emotions have been validated and worked through. Gehrels (1984) found feelings to be the trigger for reflecting.

Two studies, Hunter (1980) and Taylor (1993) provided findings inferring that a perspective transformation could occur in some individuals without critical reflection, such that "meaning structures may become altered outside the participants focal awareness" (p. 171). This lack of critical reflection was further clarified by both Scott (1993) and Elias (1991) who looked at individuals involved in social transformation and found that Mezirow overlooks the power of the unconscious. In Elias' study this meant discovering the irrational and developing life's direction through visions and dreams, while Scott identified the power of the collective unconscious as a stronger force than "rational assumptions or self interest" (p. 240). Questions are still left unanswered, such as, when and where in transformative learning is critical reflection essential? And how do meaning structures change without critical reflection?

### *Other Ways of Knowing*

Mezirow's was criticized in the previous section for an over reliance on rationality and failing to recognize the essentiality of other ways of knowing in transformative learning. Multiple studies infer to its significance, such as intuition (Brooks, 1989), affective learning (Clark, 1991; Scott, 1991; Sveinunggaard, 1994), and the guiding force of feelings (Hunter, 1980; Taylor, 1994). The Group for Collaborative Inquiry (1994) in a recent study reconceptualizing transformative learning process identified the significance of whole person learning—"awareness and use of all the functions we have available for knowing, including our cognitive, affective, somatic, intuitive, and spiritual dimensions" (p. 171). Sveinunggaard (1994) in a study exploring the role of affective learning in a transformation found that participants could not act on cognitive learning until they had engaged in "learning how to identify, explore, validate, and express affect . . ." (p. 278). Egan (1985) found while exploring the learning process of family therapy that a "more complex learning occurred when an affective change occurred" (p. 216). More needs to be understood about the role of affective learning in the process of perspective transformation? How do other ways of knowing relate to critical reflection? What factors inhibit/promote affective learning?

Included in other ways of knowing is connected knowing, learning through relationships, which is referred to only briefly in the process of perspective transformation. The significance of relationships to transformative learning was the strongest finding found in the review. It was conceptualized in a variety of ways, such as modeling (Brooks, 1989; Hunter, 1980; Morgan, 1987), networking (Elias, 1993; Schlesinger, 1983), learning-in-relationship (Group for Collaborative Inquiry, 1994), friendships (Holt, 1994; Taylor, 1994), and as developing trust (Egan, 1985; Gehrels, 1984). Cochrane (1981) found in a study about the meaning derived from personal withdrawal experiences that, "it is in and through the disclosure of one's self to another that meaning develops and is enhanced" (p. 114). Other questions still remain, such as what is inherent about a "relationship" with another that lends itself to transformative learning? Why are some relationships more helpful than others? How do relationships, other ways of knowing, and critical reflection interrelate in a perspective transformation?

### *Perspective Transformation*

In this final area the outcome of a perspective transformation is explored and along with the overall design of Mezirow's model of perspective transformation. The model offered by Mezirow (1991), a linear, step-wise process, was confirmed in general by some studies (Cochrane, 1981; Egan, 1985; Hunter, 1980; Lytle, 1989; Morgan, 1987; Williams, 1985), but later studies found it to be a recursive, evolving, and a spiraling process (Coffman, 1989; Elias, 1993; Holt, 1994; Laswell, 1994; Taylor, 1994). Questions still remain about the order and the interrelationship of the different factors in the process of perspective transformation.

Most of the studies concur with Mezirow's definition of a perspective transformation on one level, that it involves a change in meaning perspectives, an increase in self-confidence, and action in relation to the new perspective. However, many studies found the definition too narrow and rationally-based. Clark (1991) identified three dimensions to a transformation: psychological, convictional, and behavioral. Additional characteristics of a transformation emerge from other studies as well, such as an increase in power (Hunter, 1980; Pierce, 1986; Schlesinger, 1983; Scott, 1991; Sveinunggaard, 1994; Turner, 1986), spirituality, a transpersonal realm



of development (Cochrane, 1981; Hunter, 1980; Scott, 1991; Sveinunggaard, 1994), compassion for others (Gehrels, 1984); creativity (Scott, 1991) and a new connectedness with others (Gehrels, 1984; Laswell, 1994). Three studies, interestingly, identified regression (Williams, 1985) and flashbacks (Laswell, 1994) among participants following a perspective transformation. More research is needed in understanding the long-term view of a perspective transformation? Does it continue to change, regress or remain static? Also, several studies purported a perspective transformation among participants, but offered no data for support/clarification. There still seems to be a lack of a clear definition of what constitutes a perspective transformation. Questions remain of what are its inherent characteristics? Also, what amount of change constitutes a perspective transformation? Most of these studies were carried out in retrospect and do not clearly know the participants original perspective prior to a transformative learning experience.

### Conclusion

This review of the empirical studies of transformative learning implies the need for a reconceptualization of the process of a perspective transformation. Specifically, the process needs to recognize to a greater degree the significant influence of context (personal and social factors), the varying nature of the catalyst of the process, the minimization of the role of critical reflection and increased role of other ways of knowing, and overall broadening of the definition/outcome of a perspective transformation. Research needs to continue particularly in the areas of cultural diversity, the fostering of transformative learning in the classroom, and the nature and relationship between critical reflection and other ways of knowing. Designs of research including other methods beyond interviews, such as observations and content analysis in the investigation of a perspective transformation in an ongoing educational context would be extremely valuable. In conclusion, it is the hope of this review to move the study of transformative learning to another level, one that encourages a more critical perspective of its inherent components and their relationship to each other and two, encourages the use of more creative and in-depth methods of research of its application in practice.

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## **Out of the Closet: Lesbian and Gay Adult Educators and Sexual Orientation Issues in the University Learning Environment**

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**Abstract:** This qualitative study examined how "out" lesbian and gay faculty members deal with sexual orientation in the classroom and how they perceive their own sexual orientation affects the learning environment in adult higher education contexts.

The role of adult and higher education in responding to the educational needs of a multicultural society is discussed in many circles. While some authors make passing reference to lesbian and gay issues as a multicultural concern, there is a paucity of empirically-based literature that deals with this issue in general, and there is virtually no literature that addresses this issue specifically in an adult higher education context. Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine how gay, lesbian, or bisexual faculty members in an adult higher education context perceive that their sexual orientation affects their teaching, students' learning, and how they deal with gay or lesbian concerns as a multicultural issue in their own classes.

### **Related Literature**

There is no single definition of "multicultural education" and different authors use the term in different ways to focus on or include different cultural groups. In discussing lesbian, gay and bisexual concerns as a multicultural issue, Pagenhart (1994) notes that some use the term "multiculturalism" to merely promote the colorizing of US history and culture without addressing the nature of power relations between and among group. Others specifically call attention to issues of marginalization which, she argues, foregrounds power relations by examining how and why many groups have been left out in the construction of the "master narrative." In discussing anthologies that do include sexual identity as a multicultural concern, she notes that sexuality is indeed a power laden signifier in the United States and is beginning to be seen as such, and should thus be included in further discussions of multicultural and marginalization issues in education.

While there is beginning to be increased discussion of sexuality in broader discussions of multicultural education, there has been little discussion of these issues on any level specifically in the field of adult education. Hill (1994) recently did a critique of heterosexist discourse in adult education, but there has been no discussion in the literature of the field about how the sexual orientation of the adult educator affects the adult learning environment. There is, however, some reflective pieces by lesbian and gay faculty members in higher education and in specific disciplines which can inform such discussions in the field of adult education (cf. anthologies such as Cruikshank, 1982; Garber, 1994; Ringer, 1994). In addition, two data based studies were found that examined aspects of dealing with sexual orientation issues in the classroom in higher education settings. In a survey study of 27 gay and lesbian speech communication faculty members, Ringer (1994) found that most discuss sexual orientation issues in the classroom, but that most do not directly discuss their own sexual orientation specifically in the classroom setting. Opffer (1994) found in her qualitative study of 17 "out" gay and lesbian faculty members, that the



participants used a variety of strategies both direct and indirect to be out to their students, either in the classroom or in other educational contexts and report a variety of reactions. In an attempt to begin to fill the lack specifically in adult education, this study examined how lesbian and gay educators who deal with adult students in higher education settings deal with sexual orientation in their own classrooms and their perceptions of how it affects students' learning.

### Methodology

This study was informed by a phenomenological theoretical framework which is concerned with understanding the meaning of events to ordinary people in specific situations. The predominant means of data collection were audio-taped semi-structured interviews approximately one and a half hours in length with 8 currently teaching full-time gay and lesbian faculty members from three different universities. Two of the universities were major research universities; the third was a small private liberal university. Instructors were chosen who had three or more years experience in classroom teaching at the university level with nontraditional adults and who were "out" at least to the majority of their departmental colleagues. There were three men and five women in the study, ranging in age from 35 to 53. One of the participants was from the British Isles; the rest identified primarily as Euro-American, although two of the men in the study also discussed aspects of their part Native-American heritage. One of the participants was a tenured full professor, two were tenure-track assistant professors. The other five were either instructors or were teaching at a university that doesn't grant tenure. They taught in one or more of the disciplines of history, English, education, women's studies, cultural studies, gay and lesbian studies, counseling, psychology, systems theory, and technological communications. Data were analyzed according to the constant comparative method.

### Findings

The findings of the study center around four major inter-related themes around both the issue of the faculty members' sexual orientation and how they deal with these issues as a multicultural concern in their classrooms. The primary and overarching theme centers on the issue of what it means to be "out", particularly in an educational context. The other three themes--sexual orientation and relevance to course content and educational context, perceived effects of the instructor's sexual orientation on classroom interaction patterns and students' learning, and sexuality informing the debates on multiculturalism -- flow directly from this first theme. While these themes will be discussed separately below for purposes of organization, it is important to bear in mind the interconnection among categories.

### What Does It Mean to Be Out?

The most overarching theme of the study could be encapsulated in the phrase "what does it mean to be out?" All eight of the faculty members defined themselves as being "out" of the closet on their respective campuses, and all of them reported being out to virtually all of their departmental colleagues. But in defining themselves as "out" does not necessarily mean that they had verbally announced their sexual orientation to or discussed it with each of their departmental colleagues. Rather, it was discussed with some and was assumed to be public knowledge with the remainder

of the department. Laura, an English professor at a major research university reported:

I would say I'm out to anybody who's interested in knowing. When I go to departmental functions Janice [her partner] comes along... I have talked about my lesbianism with most of the women faculty members in the department in an explicit way just because we go out for beers together, or they're around when we're having more intimate discussions, but I don't suppose I have addressed it directly with the men.

Nevertheless, she went on to describe a male colleague inviting her and her partner for Thanksgiving dinner, which she felt was a clear indication that he (as well as other male colleagues) were certainly aware of her sexual orientation. Like Laura, all of the participants assumed that all of their colleagues knew about their sexual orientation, even though many made statements similar to the following statement by Peter a full professor of communication: "In essence every one knows, I mean, because I don't hide it, but I don't make a thing about it."

The point that some of the faculty members made about being out is that it is always a process. Janine, a faculty member in an education department reported "I'm out to all the faculty in the department, so I feel like on campus I'm out and that it's not a secret, but then again I don't necessarily discuss it with everyone I meet. Coming out is always a process, because there's always someone who doesn't know." Daniel made a similar point in discussing the fact that he was out, and said "I mean the closet is always going to be there; it's always going to define lesbian and gay identities, but in a lot of ways, it's always a process of continually coming out." Nancy made use of a metaphor to describe coming out as "the image of being in the ocean and having waves that are constant--there's never any end to the waves."

While all the faculty members saw themselves as out on campus in general because they were out to all their departmental colleagues, some were more explicit about it than others in regards to their campus activities with students. Paula was probably the most explicit of the participants, though she doesn't always announce it verbally in class. Rather she says:

Well I never actually go in and say 'hi, I'm Paula and I'm a lesbian and I'll be teaching this course.' It's that it's such a self evident fact of my existence at every moment. It's sort of a seamless web or whatever, the fabric is just ongoing--I certainly have worn stuff, I say stuff, I go to rallies and marches or whatever it is; I have stuff on my office door, I have posters in my office; I don't always feel like I need to make a statement..., and I use a lot of humor in my classes, so I don't want to beat them over the head with 'ok, I'm going to make a very serious announcement!'

Nancy is also quite explicit, and generally makes it a point to come out at some point in all of her classes. Neil reports that all his students know because lesbian and gay issues are listed on his vita and in departmental paraphernalia as one of his interest areas. Daniel reported that he has coordinated a faculty and student discussion group on queer theory so he assumes that all the students know, particularly because he is out in general. In referring to students' knowledge, particularly gay and lesbian students' knowledge of his sexual identity he said "if you're out, it's buzz buzz. All the queers on campus know! They all know!" Sarah reported that she has occasionally made passing references to her partner in the classroom, and while Janine reported never specifically discussing her sexual orientation in the classroom, like Sarah, she has discussed it with students in less formal contexts, such as advising sessions or in

other informal discussions. While Laura generally does not discuss her own sexual orientation in the classroom, she reports that she believes students assume that she's a lesbian: "If one teaches any kind of queer theory..., if you have the nerve to talk about gay issues and not to distance yourself personally, then there's a good chance you're gay." She later further explained her thoughts on students' knowledge of her sexual orientation:

My sense would be that, given graduate student hotlines, all of my graduate students who want to know, know, ... with undergraduates, I would say that my sense is that the lesbian students certainly know, and in certain cases, it's clear that the gay male students know. I'm not sure about other people.

Thus, while these faculty members vary in their ways of being "out" and the degree of explicitness in their presentation, they all see themselves as out in their university contexts and assume that many of their students, particularly their gay and lesbian students are aware of their sexual identity whether or not it's directly addressed. Nevertheless, they also acknowledge the never ending process of coming out since no matter how out they are, there are always people that don't know.

### **Sexual Orientation as Relevant to Course Content and Educational Context**

All eight of these instructors deal with sexual orientation issues in the classroom on some level, though not all of them actually verbally announce their own sexual identity. The issue of relevance was key to all of them in determining whether or not to include sexual orientation issues in their course content or class discussion, or in some cases, determining whether or not to refer to their own sexual identity. Paula, who teaches both history and women's studies discussed the issue of relevance in determining how she deals with these issues in the classroom. While she sees herself as being very out in the classroom in the ways noted earlier, she suggests that her way of coming out is different, depending on the course and the context:

I try to put it in the place where it's relevant. If I'm teaching a feminist theory course, I may say up front that we'll be looking at issues of race and sexuality..., and I may problematize what it means for me to be a white woman and a lesbian to be looking at those issues, so therefore it's foregrounded and very obvious.

When teaching history, she says, "it's not going to come out in exactly the same way because I'm dealing primarily with issues where it's not directly related, but it is going to come out." She reported one incident when discussing the Dreyfus Affair, the class got into a larger discussion of anti-Semitism and oppression in general. She noted that out of that discussion "came this whole thing on prejudice, on self and 'other', on oppression, and bigotry and hatred, and in there I interjected some stuff on gays and lesbians and the current crisis about AIDs."

Nancy who teaches counseling and psychology classes makes it a point to come out in her classes because she feels that it is relevant to her course content, particularly in regard to discussing how to counsel gay and lesbian clients. In discussing her choice to come out, she says:

I'm fairly comfortable about doing that, if it feels relevant to the class. I think the issue for me is a pedagogical one: how is this going to help educate this group of students? What are the learning goals here and how can any disclosure on my part or discussion of my life be useful to them in relation to the goals of the class.

She describes typically giving a time-limited three vignette presentation from her own life experience as a lesbian to illustrate various points in regard to the course content. Both she and Paula discuss the importance of timing in determining how and when to bring up these issues. Paula reports "I go on timing; it's not something I pre-decide. It may be at a moment when I just feel like things are going well in the class and I use that run of good feeling." Nancy also goes on timing, but unlike Paula, she is very deliberate in her choice of when to discuss her own sexual orientation in the class: "Timing is a variable in terms of allowing the group to form and be at a particular phase of development... timing is there and also sort of awareness of group dynamics."

The issue of timing and pedagogical relevance or appropriateness was significant to all the faculty members in determining whether or not to come out in the classroom. Neil who also teaches psychology and counseling occasionally makes reference to his own sexual orientation and gives the example of how he may say "well, as a gay, male therapist, these are things I would consider" when it seems relevant. However, he notes "there are times at which it seems really appropriate to share something personal. But, I'm always sort of checking about why am I doing that. Am I doing this because it's doing something for me, or am I doing it because it's going to be helpful for them? And that's sort of my question that tells me whether I do it or don't do it."

It is precisely for pedagogical reasons that some faculty members choose not to discuss their sexual orientation in the classroom, even though lesbian and gay issues may be central to the course content. While Laura, Daniel, and Janine will occasionally refer to their own sexual orientation to students outside of the classroom, they generally do not discuss it in the class itself, though often sexual orientation issues are quite central to the course content along with other issues of privilege and oppression, such as gender and race. Daniel describes these issues as being a central part of all his classes but explains "by and large what we deal with is the text... when I'm teaching a course on the novel... and media constructions, how do you bring your own sexuality into that so that it's relevant?" Laura who also teaches English, makes a similar point about discussing the text as opposed to one's personal experiences. Yet at the same time Laura insists that in so doing, one is essentially talking about deeply personal issues and in referring to specific texts where she examines issues of sexuality, she says "I don't talk about my life as gay, they don't talk about their sexual lives, but I think that in sitting and looking at, let's say "Separate Lyrics" and "In Memorium" and talking about what it meant for Victorians to say that, and what it would mean for us to say it..., we end up addressing very intimate issues." In short, all of the instructors discuss sexual orientation issues in their classes when they see it as relevant, though only some of them actually come out in the classroom itself.

### **Perceived Effects of the Instructor's Sexual Orientation on Classroom Interaction Patterns and Students' Learning**

While not all of these faculty members actually come out in the classroom, all believe that their sexual orientation has a significant effect both on what goes on in classroom interaction patterns and on students' learning. Daniel, who foregrounds issues of gender, race, class, and sexuality in all of his courses, describes one comparative literature class where four of the students came out early on in the



class, either during introductions or specifically around course material. Daniel explains:

Three of them were really outspoken in class, and it was a discussion class ... This is my 8th year of teaching at a university, and this was an incredible class! I had probably 40 students, and some who had grown up in really conservative environments and I really felt that there was a real interaction and exchange and a real learning process that was taking place between students.

While Daniel doesn't discuss his own sexuality in the classroom, his interpretation of it was that the four gay and lesbian students felt safe in coming out, because he is sure that they know he is gay. When asking if he thought the same thing would have happened if he actually discussed his own identity, he said "My feeling is no. Straight students felt comfortable asking gay students their fears, questions that I know they wouldn't have addressed to me, and again I think it's because how students perceive their teachers...it's about power relations."

Janine reports that while she does not come out in the classroom, she believes her identity has a strong effect on classroom interaction patterns and on students' learning. She explains that in examining power relations between dominant and marginalized groups she spends time deconstructing dichotomy and examining all dichotomy, including race, gender, and the heterosexuality/homosexuality dichotomy as a social construction. She believes some students either know or suspect she is a lesbian and reports that sometimes students do come out in class. She described one such class where she came out to a student, a woman in her late 40s, in an informal conversation outside of the class. She reported that in another conversation nearly a year later, the student told her that one of the most significant things she learned was about lesbians--that the experience of the course deconstructed her idea of what lesbians are. "She really liked the lesbian students in the class, and she liked me. But she told me that if I had come out the first day of class, she might have shut down. When I eventually came out to her later, she apparently was ready to know it."

Laura discussed the fact that she feels that her sexual orientation has a large effect both on her own teaching and on students' learning. Even though she doesn't discuss her own life she says:

I think because of my openness in terms of sexual orientation, I can talk about [a] scene [in a text] on a number of different levels, without being freaked out by it...I can talk about a range of physical and emotional relations that's there in the literature in the 19th century, but that's blocked off to people who are anxious about homosexuality... It doesn't necessarily have to be somebody who's gay [teaching this way], but it has to be somebody who's not afraid to be thought gay, and there are very few people of whom that's true who aren't gay.

Thus Laura feels that given her own sexual orientation, she's not nervous about students seeing her as a lesbian which gives her the freedom to discuss lesbian and gay issues in a text, where other faculty members may not.

All the faculty members believed that their sexual orientation was important for purposes of role modeling, not only for gay and lesbian students, but for others as well. Many reported that often gay and lesbian students come to seek out mentoring or information. Sarah notes that when this continued to happen over time "there was something about being kind of a resource person in that area. I started then to ...feel almost a sense of responsibility." While three of them described some unpleasant experiences where they had to deal with students' and/or faculty members

homophobia, they all felt that their out gay or lesbian presence in the academy had mostly a positive effect on students' learning. Phyllis, in reflecting on both the pleasant and unpleasant experiences, noted: "If you can be the abnormal factor that fucks up the system, then that's good. ...It doesn't always look like a positive experience, but sometimes it just can be."

### **Sexuality Informing Debates on Multiculturalism**

Most of these faculty members specifically addressed the issue of sexuality as an important element in the discussion of multiculturalism. In discussing this Neil says "when I think of multicultural, it is that it is inclusive of the whole array of groups--economic, racial, ethnic, religious, spiritual, sexual orientation, gender, age." Nancy discusses the importance of dealing with all of these issues but rather focuses on the intersections of these issues and adds "I think that all of these elements of human experience are really interconnected, and I think what we, as educators, need to do is to continue to look at the interconnectedness [of these issues]."

While nearly all of them discussed the importance of including these issues in the debates on multiculturalism only some of them addressed the issue of what an inclusion of sexual identity specifically offers the debates on multiculturalism. Daniel notes "I think by and large, in the academy what multicultural education has been about is issues of race and ethnicity, but I particularly don't see it that way, because what that also means is that it's always going to be framed from a heterosexual perspective." He implicitly suggests that including sexual identity in the debates makes apparent not only heterosexist assumptions but also heterosexual privilege. Phyllis makes a similar and more expansive point when she says, "To me multiculturalism is everything from acknowledging that injustice may have roots not simply in the most obvious things we see but in the most subterranean forms of imperialism." She suggest that multiculturalism means:

working harder at [examining] how the questions that have been traditionally thought of as the right questions can be turned on their heads...Being queer can help that, problematizing, asking questions, not letting business go by as usual. Being queer really matters, because being queer represents in those debates not business as usual--refusing business as usual, and to me that's what multiculturalism is all about.

Thus, not only do Daniel and Phyllis see the importance of dealing with sexual identity issues in the debates on multiculturalism, they implicitly see it as an example of continually problematizing the notion of power relations between and among groups.

### **Summary and Discussion**

While the findings of this study are limited to faculty perceptions and have to be interpreted with caution, some tentative conclusions can be made both in regards to dealing with sexual orientation issues in the adult higher education classroom, and to how sexual orientation contributes to the debates on multiculturalism in the field of adult and higher education. First, the findings of this study support the findings in both the studies by Ringer and Opffer reported earlier. While the faculty members see themselves as out on campus, only some of them come out in very direct ways in the classroom. Nevertheless, most assume that their sexual orientation is more or less a matter of public knowledge among the faculty, and among many of the students, particularly gay and lesbian students, as well. Second, they all believe that their sexual orientation clearly affects students' learning, particularly in regards to

sexual orientation issues along with other issues of oppression and privilege. Third, while some of the faculty members have reported some unpleasant experiences of having to deal with what they interpret as students' or faculty members' homophobia, they all believe that their out presence ultimately has a positive effect on students' learning. Finally, all believe that sexuality is an important part of the debates on multiculturalism, and some of them specifically address the issues of how it contributes to the examination of the nature of power relations between and among groups and the dominant culture in the ways Pagenhart (1994) noted. While the findings of the study are limited to the perceptions of gay and lesbian faculty members, the study does begin to address gay and lesbian issues within the field of adult higher education, and makes a contribution to the adult multicultural education literature.

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## **Retention and Literacy: An Investigation of Field Dependence/ Field Independence and the Effects of Past Schooling**

**Roberta Uhland & B. Allan Quigley**

**ABSTRACT:** Retention has become one of the highest priorities in literacy and ABE. This study selected at-risk Reluctant Learners during ABE intake. RLs were placed in one control and three treatment groups to study retention. High field dependence and the promise of small group approach were encouraging outcomes.

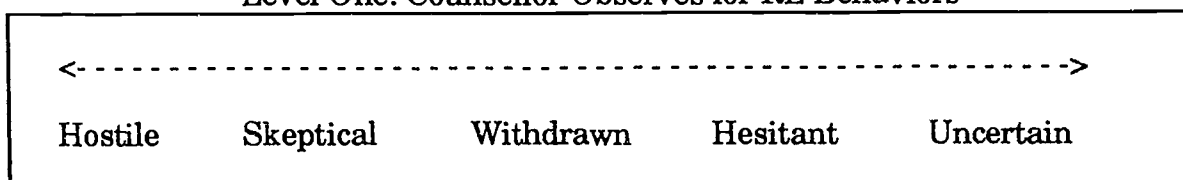
**RETENTION** has risen dramatically in recent years among the priorities for funded institutional ABE programs. However, little retention research exists to guide such programs in the field (Beder, 1991) and much of what does is not easily adaptable to the field (Fingeret, 1985). This study built on previous work by Quigley (1990, 1992a) which indicated that "at risk" Reluctant Learners (RLs) can be identified during program intake and that the reluctance arises, in large part, from negative past schooling experiences. Quigley's previous work found that RLs who dropped out of ABE said they did not get enough attention from teachers; were "bored" with content; and the counselor was the only person they turned to during their time in the program. This study hypothesized that more teacher attention and more academic challenge might improve retention. It was also hypothesized that there might be special RL characteristics beyond negative schooling experiences--perhaps identifiable learning differences between RLs and persisters (Ps) who stayed in program for over 6 months. To test this, field dependence and field independence were studied (Donnaruma et al, 1980). Learning style was a secondary question.

**METHOD.** For a direct comparison of three program approaches, a four-group quasi-experimental design was used (Figure One). The setting was a major institutional ABE program in Pittsburgh. Three hypotheses were tested: 1) RLs will stay in ABE programs longer than the Control Group if highly supported by teachers/counselors; 2) RLs will stay longer if in small classes, 3) RLs will stay in longer with one-on-one tutors. The incoming students were observed during the intake by an experienced institutional counselor (male) for indicative RL behavior (Level 1) and at Level 2 for "at risk" (RL) indicators. In both of these steps, he looked for: Hostility, low self-esteem, uncertainty about program, low commitment, lack of eye-contact, anxiousness, reticence. When they returned for placement, a second experienced institution counselor (female) interviewed the potential RLs with a Prior Schooling and Self-Perception Inventory (Quigley, 1993) (Level 3), asking them to reflect on their experiences in school and contrast those to how well they anticipated they would: 1) Perform in the same subjects in ABE; 2) make friends in ABE; 3) relate to ABE teachers; and 4) relate to ABE counsellors. Those emerging as at risk RLs wrote the Witkins Embedded Figures Test (1971), typically one week later, as administered by a trained (female) research assistant (level 4). (It is noteworthy that, in the opinion of the institution, the RL group constitutes approximately one-third of their total dropouts).



### Figure One: The Project Identification of RLs

### Level One: Counsellor Observes for RL Behaviors



## Level Two: Counsellor Observes for At-Risk Behaviors

Little eye contact, negative body language, unsure about performance, doubts about making in-class friends, doubts about teachers, "unenthused," reticent, hostile.

### Level Three: Counsellor Compares School Background

**Tested on the Past Schooling Inventory**

- uncertain about same subjects as back in school
- uncertain about new friends, eg. school pattern
- uncertain about teachers, eg. school pattern
- uncertain about outside support, eg. school pattern

#### Level Four: Research Assistant Conducts Embedded Figures Test

### Tested on the Witkins Embedded Figures Test

Found exceptionally high levels of Field Dependence indicating a need for acceptance by peers/teachers

**STUDY IMPLEMENTATION:** A total of 5 randomly selected RLs were referred to the ABE mainstream with 15-20 students per classroom as the Control. A total of 5, randomly selected, were referred to the mainstream as "Team Supported" (Treatment #1), the independent variable being more counselor/teacher attention. Here, the counselor followed up at least once/week with each RL. All the involved teachers were made aware of these RLs so special attention and as much academic challenge as possible could be given them. Five randomly selected (Treatment # 2) were interspersed among the institution's small group teaching classes, consisting of approx. 6 students and one instructor each. The lower number of peers were the independent variable here. Treatment Group #3 of five randomly selected RLs received one-on-one volunteer (literacy) tutoring at the ABE institution. The single tutor was the independent variable in the third treatment group:

FIGURE TWO: Research Project Flow Chart

Intake through to ..... &gt; maximum 5 Months

Separate 5 RLs to regular classes as Control Group

#1 (n=5 in Control Group) -----&gt;

Treatment #1: Separate 5 RLs to Team Approach in Mainstream

#1 (n=5 in Control group) -----&gt;

#2 (n=5 in Team Treatment group) -----&gt;

Compare Groups 1 &amp; 2 for retention rate

Treatment #2: Separate 5 RLs to Small Group Teaching

#1 (n=5 Control group) -----&gt;

#3 (n=5 Small Group Treatment) -----&gt;

Compare Groups 1 &amp; 3 for retention

Treatment #3: Separate 5 RLs to One-on-One Tutoring

#1 (n=5 Control group) -----&gt;

#4 (n=5 One-on-One treatment group) -----&gt;

Compare Groups 1 &amp; 4 for retention

The time RLs spent in the program is displayed in Tables 1 to 4 below:

Table 1. CONTROL GROUP DATA

NAME	AGE	RACE	SEX	DAYS	TEST	EFT	COMMENTS
Sean	23	AA	M	14	3/19	112	Chronic alcoholism, gang member, quit.
Vincent	25	AA	M	56	3/19	69	Given court probation.
Desmond	18	AA	M	57	4/2	95	Terminated for absences. gang member.
Aaron	20	AA	M	31	--	--	Terminated for absences
Adam	18	AA	M	4 mos+		109	Given court probation* gang member

CONTROL GROUP EFT TEST MEANS = 96.3, Male = 96.3, female = n/a.  
None of the control group members successfully completed the program voluntarily.  
All either quit, were terminated or had their status changed\*, becoming unwilling court order participants.

Table 2. TEAM SUPPORT GROUP DATA

NAME	AGE	RACE	SEX	DAYS	TEST	EFT	COMMENTS
Wilbert	24	AA	M	56	3/19	119	Successful on GED
Carlton	18	AA	M	10	3/19	156	Quit
Toia	20	AA	F	16	3/19	167	Jailed, gang member.
Khaleel	17	AA	M	3	3/19	--	Quit to take job
Dennis	28	AA	M	5	5/3		Didn't complete test, gang member

TREATMENT GROUP 1 EFT TEST MEANS = 147.3, Male= 137.5, female= 167  
One successfully completed the GED. This approach holds promise.

Table 3. SMALL GROUP DATA

NAME	AGE	RACE	SEX	DAYS	TEST	EFT	COMMENTS
Thomas	24	AA	M	80+	3/19	105	Successful over 3 mo. period
Mary	26	C	F	80+	3/9	180	Successful over 3 mo. period
Walter	36	AA	M	29&40	4/14	98	Successful over 3 mo. period
Gloria	33	AA	F	28	--	--	Terminated for absences.
Dave	18	AA	M	12	--	--	Quit, gang member

TREATMENT GROUP #2 TEST MEANS= 127, Male= 101.5, female= 180.  
Three RLs completed over 3 months of attendance. This approach holds promise.  
Paired learning and peer support was observed in the classes as was peer support to remain in the program.

Table 4. ONE-ON-ONE DATA

NAME	AGE	RACE	SEX	DAYS	TEST	EFT	COMMENTS
Augustus	27	AA	M	12	--	--	Quit
Jose	22	Hs	M	80+	4/2	151	Completed 3 mos., gang member
Pris	28	C	F	80+	4/14	80	Passed GED
Anthony	23	AA	M	15	5/15	122	Terminated for absences.
Kenneth	34	AA	M	12	--	--	Terminated for absences

TREATMENT GROUP #3 EFT TEST MEANS= 117.7, Male = 136.5, female= 80. Two completed more than 3 months or passed the GED. This too is a promise approach for RLs.

Also, a random sample of 5 RLs selected from the total received the Flannery Learning Style Assessment Scale (1989), indicating a high correlation between Global Learner style and high field dependence.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA:** The small group approach proved to be the most promising with 3/5 successfully completing in this study. The team approach with 1/5 and the tutoring with 2/5 proved more successful than the control group (0/5). It is seen that any of the treatments is more successful than the traditional approach.

Significantly, the field dependence means of all the RLs tested on the Witkins EFT\*\* indicated that the RLs held much higher field dependence than the EFT norms set for their comparable age (see Table 5).

The finding of high field dependence for RLs may explain the relatively higher success of the Small Group approach--high field dependence means a high level of need for acceptance, for belonging, and a need for harmony in the subject's field of experience. Several of the RLs were gang members (26.7%). The need to be accepted, the willingness to stay in a smaller group, the smaller "field," suggests promise for further research.

**FINDINGS:** 1) The two test instruments and three-step process proved effective for both identifying and verifying RLs. 2) Students who were in the treatment groups were, overall, retained longer than those in the control group. Those in the Small Group Treatment were retained the longest. 3) A highly promising finding was the high field dependency levels of the RLs. These 3 findings suggest a need to research small group teaching/learning situations and situations supporting high field dependence. And, based on a small RL sample, the RL learning style appears to be clearly global--not attending to the exact point, distractable, introducing other topics regularly. Global Learning Style correlated with high field dependence. This needs further study.



Table 5. EMBEDDED FIGURE TEST NORMS COMPARED TO RL MEANS

Witkins Embedded Figures					RL Study results			
Age	Sex	N	Mean**	S.D.	Age	Sex	N	Mean
<b>CONTROL GROUP</b>								
College	M	51	<b>45.5</b>	28.5	18-25	M	4	<b>96.3</b>
18+	F	51	<b>66.9</b>	33.6	none	F	none	<b>none</b>
<b>Treatment #1: TEAM APPROACH</b>								
College	M	51	<b>45.5</b>	28.5	17-28	M	2	<b>137.5</b>
18+	F	51	<b>66.9</b>	33.6	20	F	1	<b>167.0</b>
<b>Treatment #2: SMALL GROUP APPROACH</b>								
College	M	51	<b>45.5</b>	28.5	18-36	M	2	<b>101.5</b>
18+	F	51	<b>66.9</b>	33.6	20	F	1	<b>180.0</b>
<b>Treatment #3: ONE-ON-ONE APPROACH</b>								
College	M	51	<b>45.5</b>	28.5	22-34	M	2	<b>135.5</b>
18+	F	51	<b>66.9</b>	33.6	20	F	1	<b>80.0</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	M		<b>45.5</b>	28.5		M	10	<b>117.9</b>
	F		<b>66.9</b>	33.6		F	3	<b>142.3</b>

\*\* Seconds per item, Witkins means are as shown in the EFT Manual

**IMPLICATIONS:** The findings of this study hold promise for in-program RL referrals to alternative programs approaches. It is estimated that such referrals could impact as much as 30% of the at-risk population in ABE in the first 3 weeks. Based on these findings, programs can identify RLs using the process of intake counsellor observation and the Prior Schooling and Self-Perception Inventory (Quigley, 1993) to contrast RL expectations of ABE with past schooling experiences. While any of the three treatments were more effective than the mainstream approach, the small group was the most effective, due, perhaps, to the unexpectedly high levels of field dependence of RLs demonstrated on the Witkins EFT. It has long been recognized that "self-esteem" is a major issue in literacy. This study suggests that RLs might constitute a significant group for program attention and further research. RLs appeared to have high field dependency, high attrition rates, and appeared to stay in the program longer given any of the alternative approaches shown above.

**FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDED:** The sample in this study was relatively small due to the site administrators' concern that this study would attract/foster congregating among their rising number of gang members. A larger sample is needed. Other settings such as rural need to be tested; combinations of subjects need to be tested: more Hispanics, other combinations of African Americans/Whites,

males/females, age levels. Further research is needed on RLs' learning style preferences and characteristics.

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## **"Bolsheviks of a Better Sort": Jimmy Tompkins and the Struggle for a People's Catholicism, 1908-1928**

-Michael R. Welton

### **I: Introduction: "The Momentous Gravity of Things Now Obtaining"**

In the general adult education literature, the Antigonish Movement is often used to illustrate emancipatory or liberatory adult education practice (Brookfield, Lovett, Newman). That's the bird's eye view, from afar; up close, placed under the microscope, the movement becomes contradictory, complex, conflictual, a mix of conservative, progressive, liberal and radical currents. The primary purpose of this study is to explore the Catholic nature of this Movement; in order to do so, one must understand both the global context within which Roman Catholicism was responding to the modern world and the particularities of life in the Catholic diocese of Antigonish in eastern Nova Scotia in the early twentieth century. Caught in a swirl of pressures from within and without, the Roman Catholic Church in eastern Nova Scotia developed into a forum for the debate of its "relevance" to a modernizing and industrializing society. Beginning in the early 20th century, spearheaded by Father Jimmy Tompkins, a cadre of reform-minded priests (dubbed by Tompkins as "Bolsheviks of a Better Sort"), began to shape a new "social Catholicism" in response to the "plight of the poor" and the "plight of the Church." I contend that this dual response to the modern world--what I would call contradictory tendencies within early 20th century Catholicism--must be understood if we are to make sense of the way adult education, as discourse and practice, is shaped in eastern Nova Scotia. For the Antigonish reformers, recovering the Church's lost influence was intimately linked to their educative and political struggles to emancipate the oppressed peoples labouring in the mines, at sea, on the farms and in households.

Throughout the 19th century, the Roman Catholic Church had been very reluctant to respond to the urgent new questions posed by industrialism and modernity. The Roman Catholic Church's social ethics had been shaped in the context of a rural, patriarchal, and hierarchical society. Now, this particular form of Catholic identity was being undermined as Catholic workers grappled with the new realities of widespread poverty in the midst of excessive wealth, union organizing, cyclical economic depressions, socialist parties speaking with secular accents and women's insistent demands for social equality. If traditional forms of social solidarity were being rent by the new class divisions of industrial society, Catholics were also being forced to make sense of it all in a world in which God seemed to have receded to the outer edges of space. Church dogma, homilies, and charity for the individual poor seemed utterly inadequate responses to the new kinds of problems 20th century men and women were facing. The Catholic Church desperately needed to provide a new cultural synthesis for changed times.

Nineteenth and early twentieth century Catholicism in Europe, the United States and Canada could be described as a fortress Catholicism. Catholics were ghettoized, dissent was controlled and hostility to the "Protestant" and "secular" other encouraged. Behind the walls of a fortress Catholicism, Catholics hoped to ride

out the storms of secularism and socialism seeking to invade their walls. In the diocese of Antigonish the Catholic hierarchy watched over its largely Scottish Highlander constituency, and Catholicism became almost inseparable from a rural, poor, patriarchal, anti-modernist existence. The diocesan newspaper, *The Casket*, condemned the evils of socialism, suffragettes, Protestants and assorted infidel movements. Suffragettes, for example, were depicted as "wild creatures," who if given the vote, "would raise problems not yet thought of..." (*The Casket*, July 17, 1913). Yet, towards the end of 1913 one notices a new spirit percolating through ultramontanist Catholicism. The Rev. Andrew Egan, writing on the subject of "The Catholic Church the Friend of the Working Man" (*The Casket*, October 23, 1913), called upon Catholics to stand for the "right of the employed against injustice from all sides, and for any movement that makes for social betterment..."

## II: Rerum Novarum Comes to Nova Scotia

Father Egan's words are inexplicable outside Pope Leo XIII's epochal encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, delivered in 1891. Under considerable pressure from grassroots labour movements to respond to the plight of the working classes, Leo XIII lowered the drawbridge of fortress Catholicism to the plight of suffering workers. A laissez-faire Catholicism was no longer acceptable, and Catholics were encouraged to understand the modern world in order to bring a Catholic influence to bear upon the major problems of the day, particularly the social problem. Transcendental justification was provided for social action, and a certain amount of space was opened up for dialogue regarding what constituted a just economic and political order. Yet, the papal prescription against socialism and for private property constrained the possible solutions to the social crisis, and made communication difficult between the Catholic social activists and militant socialists as well as between conservative and progressive/populist factions within the Catholic church itself.

Thus, there is a profound ambiguity in this Leonine opening out to the world. The Church is under considerable pressure to move towards the world (*Rerum Novarum* addresses the plight of the industrial worker) in order to restore its lost influence over secular affairs by competing directly with other ideologies (socialism or Protestantism). The Antigonish reform-cadre who clustered around Tompkins--a spearhead minority--were impelled into action by two potentially contradictory impulses. One, which we could label the universal impulse, was to respond authentically and humanly to the "plight of the poor" on farm, sea and in the mine. The other, which we could label the particularist impulse, was to act to ensure that the "plight of the Church", the threat to its own identity, was addressed. In a lecture to St. Francis Xavier students in early 1952, Moses Coady (who was mentored into leadership by his cousin Tompkins) beautifully captures these two impulses. "It may be good for our souls to investigate why the masses of our time have been lost to the Church and why the great masses of the world's people still live in conditions not in harmony with their dignity as human beings. For Coady, the loss of the working masses was a "great scandal," and he proclaimed to his students that the "Church always has been jealous of having a say in the guidance of the institutions operating in these fields." The desire to restore the lost influence of the Catholic Church is, I argue, strongly and weakly present in Catholic thought and action in Nova Scotia. The Catholic integrists wanted to maintain the Church's authority and governance of



all domains of society, and the Catholic populists, sensing that this latter position might be untenable in the modern world, sought to participate in debates about society's future as one dialogue partner among many. *Rerum Novarum* has been interpreted in status quo maintaining ways in the history of Catholicism. But Tompkins and the reform-cadre of Antigonish read *Rerum Novarum* as a text that demands radical engagement with the pressing issues of their suffering region.

### **III: Moving Forward: Awakening the People from their Apathy**

The reformers in early twentieth century Nova Scotia had more than their share of pressing issues to contend with. Outward migration had been continuous from the late nineteenth into the first two decades of the twentieth. Indeed, the "vacant farm" symbolized the plight of rural society. The plight of rural society was exacerbated, too, by the significant shift of population to the burgeoning industrial towns (Glace Bay in Cape Breton grew from 6,945 to 16,562 between 1901 and 1910). Many fewer young people than in earlier decades were staying down on the farm, lured to the booming West, or into waged work in the mines, steel factories or subsidiary industries like the Eastern Car Company in New Glasgow which advertised for 500 jobs in July, 1913. The history of coal and steel in Nova Scotia is a history of bitter class struggle, violence, exploitation and miserable working and living conditions. And to make matters even worse, the region was experiencing a crisis in the fishery. Thousands of fishermen were being forced out of the fishery, largely by the rapacious intrusion of the huge beam trawlers. When Jimmy Tompkins went to Canso as parish priest in January, 1923, he discovered that many of the fishermen and their families were close to starvation.

Tompkins began his work at St. Francis Xavier College, located in the small town of Antigonish, in 1902, becoming vice-president in 1908. The very name, St. Francis Xavier, today has a kind of luminous glow surrounding it for many adult educators. But in the early twentieth century it was a very modest and parochial institution, scarcely deserving the name of "university." Tompkins believed that Catholic higher education lagged terribly behind the modern world; in its revitalization lay at least some answers to the desperate economic and political situation facing Nova Scotians. Tompkins played a leading role in sending promising men throughout the world to acquire the latest knowledge about the natural and social sciences. Dr. Tompkins and his friend and colleague, "Little Doc" Hugh Macpherson (who came to St.FX in 1900 and is one of Nova Scotia's pioneering popular educators in agriculture), embodied the new winds of populism beginning to blow in a rather lethargic cultural and intellectual milieu.

In 1912 Tompkins returned from a British universities meeting held at Oxford ablaze with desire to carry the university to the people. It was dawning on Tompkins that adult education could precipitate a cultural awakening in men's and women's hearts and souls. Foreshadowing the concerns of late twentieth popular educators, Tompkins maintained that workers would be dominated and exploited unless they got knowledge for themselves. Education was the way to power. But how to proceed? The leadership of the diocese--Bishop Morrison and Rector Hugh Macpherson (not to be confused with "Little Doc")--were neither sympathetic to Tompkins' radical intuitions nor his importunate nature. Beginning in late 1913, impatient of "noble

theorizing" (Letter to Moses Coady, October 29, 1914), Tompkins plunged into feverish social action on two fronts. He opened a column on the "Forward Movement" in *The Casket*, and began to orchestrate action to boost civic awareness and responsibility. The period of the Antigonish Forward Movement, from its beginnings in late 1913 to its gradual dissipation by the end of 1915, is particularly important for our understanding of adult education and the new Catholicism. First, it is clear that Tompkins believed that the plight of rural society had to be central to any reform agenda. Second, that sectarian attitudes had to be rejected and a new era of dialogue with Protestants opened up. Third, Tompkins' populist leanings are manifest in his scathing denunciations of local political bosses. Fourth, it is in this period that we see the crystallization of a self-conscious vanguard of reform-minded priests. The Forward Movement sought to repopulate the country, beautify the town, dredge the harbour and find an educator to work with farmers. They succeeded only in getting Little Doc Hugh Macpherson to work as an agricultural representative in 1914. This was, however, a major accomplishment, and it is clear that "popular education" in the early twentieth century meant that scientific knowledge was mediated to the common people. Science could enlighten farmers as to the causes of their dilemmas and problems, and could enable them to take more control over their lives.

#### **IV: "Fraught with Wonderful Possibilities"**

The Antigonish Forward Movement precipitated important social learning processes. Once "commercial pessimism" and citizen lassitude" (a colonized, or oppressed mentality) had been thematized on the ground of civil society, debate opened up around the possible ways forward. Slowly it began to dawn on people that "underdevelopment" was not a natural condition; that their cultural awareness was responsible, in large part, for their current predicament. By the end of World War I, Jimmy Tompkins was acutely aware that a new spirit of democracy and questioning of power elites was breaking into western people's consciousness. People were hungry for knowledge, and they wanted a say in how society was being run. From 1918 until he is banished from St. Francis Xavier in December, 1922, Jimmy Tompkins intensifies his educational agitational work.

##### **A. He creates the "For the People" column in *The Casket* in 1918**

This is a very significant move on the part of the reform cadre. In column after column, Tompkins and the reformers (including the Englishmen, Henry Somerville, and the American, John Ryan) argue that the common people must learn how society operates and direct their action based on this knowledge. The reformers successfully create a new discourse ] which, rather than reacting defensively to modernism, now becomes one of the competing options interplaying with others in the conflictual cultural field of Nova Scotia. But what particularly distinguishes this discourse (which I label Catholic populism) is the fervent and strong emphasis on adult education as central to the process of enlightenment and empowerment. Pedagogical activism, or transformation through self-activity, is placed at the heart of this populism (which skillfully weaves itself out of different ideological strands).

#### B. He opens up dialogue with industrial workers

By the end of World War I Tompkins is still concerned with the plight of rural society. But he now begins to more consciously address the labor question. In the "Education and Social Conferences" of 1918 and 1919, he succeeds in opening up dialogue on questions of industrial democracy. On his own, he speaks with the "red" leadership of the workers in Cape Breton. He tries to foster a WEA-style adult education for the industrial workers (rather than the Plebs League favored by Communist workers in the UK).

#### C. He launches the People's School in January 1921

Tompkins launched the People's School (about 51 "men" come to the School, held at St. Francis Xavier) to demonstrate the power of adult education to change people's way of seeing and acting within the world. It turns out to be a great success: Moses Coady, who taught mathematics at the School, found the students "anxious for knowledge and desirous of improvement...The time is ripe, it would seem, for a vigorous program of adult education in this country." And the progressive Halifax Herald (May 28, 1921) commented: "For many years universities everywhere have been, and most of them still are, laboring under the misconception that they by divine right, shall serve the wealthy and privileged classes, and in no degree promote popular education."

#### D. He actively promotes the federation of universities in Nova Scotia in 1921 and 1922

Tompkins spearheaded an enormously controversial effort to create a University of Nova Scotia. He believed that Catholic higher education was in a terrible mess, and that by itself, St. Francis Xavier could not prepare Catholic men and women to confront the modern world. The Carnegie Corporation was willing to provide funding for a non-sectarian university system. Within this scheme, Dalhousie would become the center and St. Francis would become a kind of people's community college (as would Mount Allison (Methodist) and Acadia (Baptist)). In Halifax, a Catholic College, akin to St. Michael's in Toronto, would be established. The poor, underresourced religious colleges could not really fund high-level university and graduate work. Did not some sort of unification make eminent sense? Unlike Bishop Morrison and Rector Hugh Macpherson, Tompkins did not fear the secular world of the natural and social sciences. He believed, one can conjecture, that there was no contradiction between God's revealed truth and the natural laws, created by God, governing natural and human affairs. Both "truths" would converge, and the well-equipped Catholic professor of any of the natural sciences could place his or her scholarly work in the service of more socially efficient practices, be they in the fishery or on the farm.

A royal battle within the Church ensued. The hierarchy feared secular places--breeders of atheism and syphilis--and Scots and Acadians were told that along with St. Francis, they would also lose their identities. The issue was painful and difficult and complex. The progressive agenda, coupled with the federationist move, was too much for the Church hierarchy. In late December, 1922, Father Jimmy Tompkins was removed from his position, and sent to Canso, a fog-bound outport fishing village.

**V: Real adult education springs from the pain of the people**

From 1923 until St. Francis Xavier actually agreed to create an extension department in 1928, Tompkins agitated amongst the fishermen. By 1927, his pedagogical activity and seed-sowing took root, and many fishermen helped along by reform-priests in the fishing villages, forced the government into inquiring into the state of the fishery. The commissioners sided with the plight of the fishermen, recommending adult education for cooperation. The reform cadre also agitated for an extension department in the 1920s meetings of the "Education and Social Conference." By 1928, reform-cadre efforts to pressure the Church hierarchy to create an extension department and to launch a coherent attack on social and economic problems had succeeded, and Moses Coady was appointed as first extension director. After a whirlwind stint organizing fishermen's unions, Coady and the reformers began to shape what would become known throughout the world as the "Antigonish Movement" in 1929 and 1930. The creation of the Extension Department had been born out of acute suffering amongst the people and the ceaseless agitation of Jimmy Tompkins and his band of "Bolsheviks of a Better Sort."



# SITING PROGRAM PLANNING THEORY IN ADULT EDUCATION: THE SELECTIVE TRADITION OF PRIVILEGING TECHNICAL RATIONALITY

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**Abstract:** Planning theory in adult education attempts to improve planning practice by prescribing a "selective tradition" of technical rationality. The problem is that this tradition selectively organizes our attention to only certain possibilities of action, thereby limiting our sense of what counts as planning practice and thus limiting our sense of what adult education could be. In this paper we depict the historical development of planning theory in order to show how effectively this selective tradition has managed planning theory discourse.

During the 1930s, a theory of program planning begins to emerge in adult education (e.g., Bryson, 1936) that, once it becomes well codified in the 1950s (e.g., Knowles, 1950; London, 1960) and despite multiple variations, has remained remarkably stable to the present. This traditional view of program adult education planning theory has attempted to improve planning practice by prescribing a scientifically-based procedural logic of completing certain planning tasks (i.e., assessing needs, constructing objectives, developing content, choosing instructional methods, and evaluating results) as a way of optimally ordering and directing our planning activities. The logic of this orthodoxy has continued unassailed. Thus, evolving most directly from a behaviorist Tylerian legacy, planning theory has been seen as one of those safe areas in which all of the theoretical issues were resolved a generation ago. The only continuing serious problem has not been theoretical but strategic: how to get practitioners to follow the theoretical prescriptions (Sork & Cafferalla, 1989). But the problem with this procedural tradition is that it selectively organizes our attention to only certain possibilities of action (Forester, 1989), thereby limiting our sense of what counts as planning practice and thus ultimately limiting our sense of what adult education could be.

To broach the larger issue of what adult education is all about, we ask the question of what is adult education planning theory about. As already noted, it is conventionally proposed that planning theory helps adult educators plan better (e.g., Knowles, 1950; London, 1960; Sork & Caffarella, 1989). While in a limited technical sense this may be true, in our view adult education planning theory represents a "selective tradition" (Williams, 1961) promoting a dominant "discourse" (Foucault, 1972) that privileges "technical rationality" (Schon, 1983). We use this paper to argue that planning theory represents a selective tradition of discourse that is dominated by a scientific ideology whose power lies in promoting only procedural kinds of activities as legitimate adult education planning action. In this respect, we believe that the more significant purpose of planning theory as a selective tradition, despite its utilitarian mandates, is to manage the discourse about how we talk about planning action in order to selectively limit what and whose knowledge counts. Thus we argue that the purpose of this selective tradition of scientifically-based, theoretical discourse is to define the boundaries of acceptable adult education planning action. Setting such parameters for legitimate adult education directly serves the interest of promoting and controlling the professionalization of adult education practice (Wilson, 1993). Therefore the purpose of this study is to depict the historical development of

adult education planning theory in order to show how its discourse has selectively privileged technical rationality.

Following Hooper's (1992) analysis of urban planning theory, we construct a time geography of the emergence of the technical rational selective tradition in adult education in terms of three "sittings": the emergence of scientific discourse in the professionalization movement in adult education in the 1920s; the emergence of technical planning models in the 1940s; and the emergence in the 1980s of oppositional movement to reclaim the social transformation purpose of adult education. This analysis forms the basis for subsequent studies to recover lost planning practices that fail to conform to the selective tradition of privileging technical rationality. Yet such practice is crucial to understanding the importance of planning in adult education because it demonstrates expanded, rather than limited, possibilities of what adult education can be.

#### DISCOURSE ANALYSIS: HISTORY AS ENCOUNTERS WITH SELECTIVE TRADITIONS

In order to situate this analysis conceptually and methodologically, we draw upon three perspectives. First, we depend upon a view of history as critique in which we use our analysis to challenge the orthodoxy of received traditions (Wilson & Melichar, in press). Second, in arguing for history as critique, we introduce Williams' (1961) notion of a selective tradition as a way of interpreting the emergence of technical rational planning theory in adult education. Third, analytically, we draw upon Foucault's (1972) notion of discourse analysis in order to reveal and critique the historical pattern of how this selective tradition of technical rational discourse has come to dominate planning theory in adult education (see Wilson, 1993). Gilbert (1989) provides a series of questions to use in revealing discourse that include examining "texts" for the jargon, terms, and metaphors that frame the meaning of discourse; examining the broad topics and concepts that organize the discourse; describing the underlying problems that generate the discourse; and revealing the silences in the discourse. As data sources, we draw upon the many texts of planning theory (see Sork & Buskey, 1986) and the history of the professionalization movement in adult education to sketch the historical emergence of this tradition. Thus we use this methodology to construct a history that contributes to "the effort to find out why and how our thinking [and we would add, acting] carries the past within it" (Minnich, 1990, p. 29).

#### SITING THE SELECTIVE TRADITION OF PRIVILEGING TECHNICAL RATIONALITY IN ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM PLANNING THEORY

Before we begin siting the emergence of this movement, we briefly depict the nature of technical rationality in order to better see its profound influence on the development of adult education planning theory. Schon's near-classic definition is our point of departure: technically rational professional practice is "instrumental problem solving made rigorous by the application of scientific theory and technique" because only the professions "practice rigorously technical problem solving based on specialized scientific knowledge" (1983, p. 21-22). A major distinction is implied in this definition that is central to understanding the orthodoxy of adult education planning theory. In the technical rational tradition, theory is separated from but applied to practice. At the peak of the hierarchy of professional knowledge are general principles (theory) which contain within them algorithms for solving concrete problems (practice). In this way theory is applied to practice in order to make

practice systematically effective in solving problems. Conventional models of professionalization routinely and explicitly promulgate this relationship of science applied to practice problems (Schon, 1983). Central to this understanding of professional practice is what Forester (1989) calls the ideal "rational-comprehensive" depiction of scientific inquiry of having a well-defined problem, considering a full array of alternative solutions, obtaining comprehensive information about all possible consequences, and having unlimited resources to conduct inquiry. In this view, given the power of rational scientific inquiry, any problem can be instrumentally solved. It is easy to see how thoroughly adult education planning theory has adopted these assumptions. Examine nearly any planning model and underlying it will be this prevailing scientific logic for rational action. Indeed, the set of guiding principles that solve concrete planning problems--assessing needs, defining objectives, planning instruction, and evaluating results--represents logically and procedurally the scientific method. So where does this theoretical hegemony of technical rationality come from? To begin, we look at the emergence of the professionalization movement and its aspirations to scientific practice in adult education.

#### Siting I: Professionalization and the Discourse of Technical Rationality

It is routinely argued that the professionalization movement in adult education begins in the 1950s (e.g., Brookfield) as the field seeks to disassociate itself from its movement heritage in order to legitimate its academic activity. We suggest that the shift from a practical endeavor to an academic discipline of technical competence began much earlier, that the origins of the professionalization movement lie in the proliferation of scientific discourse underlying the field's effort to begin studying itself in the 1920s. So the purpose of this section is to illustrate how scientifically studying and professionalizing practice is a common concern in the early days of the modernization movement which thus sets the stage for the emergence of an explicit technical rationality of planning theory in the 1950s. Thus we show how the selective tradition of technical rationality effectively manages the discourse of what is considered legitimate planning theory.

We begin with Cartwright's (1935) retelling of the emerging purpose of the American Association of Adult Education (AAAE). Cartwright recounts how in 1924 Keppel, director of the Carnegie Corporation, wanted to know more about adult education in the United States but that "no one had any facts" (1935, p. 12) to tell him. According to Cartwright the first major debate of the advisory council that presaged the formation of AAAE in 1926 was whether to institute "a comprehensive survey of adult education"; while this issue remained unresolved, it was decided "to commence immediately a series of studies" (Cartwright, 1935, p. 13). To be sure, these studies often investigated the existence and character of adult education activity (e.g., chautauquas, lyceums, labor education, leisure education, extension, correspondence schools, etc.). But another major concern is just as evident. Significantly, Cartwright, in describing the formation of AAAE in 1926, quotes sections of its constitution. The objective of the association "shall be to promote the development and improvement of adult education in the United States . . . It shall undertake to provide for the gathering and dissemination of information concerning adult education aims and methods of work . . . to conduct a continuous study of work being done in this field and to publish from time to time the results of this study . . ." (1935, p. 17). This statement represents an emblematic discourse that is significant in two important ways. First and most obvious is to promote the adult education

"movement" which we believe goes beyond the typically represented concerns of "revealing" the widespread presence of adult education in American society (Keppel's concern for the "facts") and moves toward expressing a concern for improving adult education. Secondly, this latter concern we believe is directly connected to the task of conducting studies of adult education. Studying the work in the field is intended to improve the practice of adult educators. Thus the key technical rational interest emerges early in the operational policies of AAAE. Cartwright continues expressing these concerns in his yearly reports up to the time of his ten year study in 1935.

As director of AAAE, Cartwright's concerns for developing operational policy reflect the prevalent scientific discourse, which is characteristically evident in much of the literature of the period. Examining sources connected to Carnegie and AAAE in the 1920s and 1930s will reveal a constant reference to "research," "study," "experimentation," "improving practice," "disseminating knowledge," "professional interests," and the like. For example, Beals (1934) description of AAAE defines the organization's responsibility as cataloging and disseminating knowledge produced through conducting and sponsoring research. Bryson (1936) argues eloquently for the use of scientific method to guide the practice of adult education: "method is the only substitute for divine inspiration. Knowledge of method distinguishes the professional from the amateur" (p. 68). Kotinski (1933) argues similarly. Even though her major thesis is to promote a social action form of adult education, she talks about the need for "expertise," particularly in terms of analyzing "means and methods . . . both for suggestions and improvement" by seeking "expert help on the educational problems" (p. 110) practitioners face. Locke (1936) describes the Atlanta and Harlem "experiments" as having "demonstrated the effectiveness of programs professionally planned and administered" (p. 127). Beals and Brody (1941) collect and analyze the research literature in adult education not for "average readers," but [for] 'serious students' who . . . desire to enlarge their knowledge through study" (p. xiii). Nowhere is this discourse more evident than that perennial topic in adult education of adult learning. Much of this early professionalization ferment was no doubt galvanized by the availability of Thorndike's "scientific" studies of adult intelligence and its crucial and widely disseminated finding that adults could indeed continue to learn. Likewise, the centerpiece of Cartwright's ten year study is a 52 page chapter entitled "Experimentation," which is "devoted to the task of making available to those concerned with adult education actual accounts of experimentation in the field" (1935, p. 67). Beals describes these experiments as essential to "creating a body of sound theory and constructive practice" (1936, p. 13).

Despite the more technical interpretation that we would likely impose today on the meaning of this discussion, it is evident that a scientific and technical discourse is coming to dominate the early attempts to construct the field. So by the early 1930s, within the Carnegie-AAAE auspices of promoting the study and definition of the field of adult education, there is an explicit attempt to link scientific study with practice in order to professionalize the occupation. We have sketched this movement in order to characterize the emerging discourse. Such a claim should not be surprising, for, as Schon (1983) argues, this attempt to scientifically legitimate practice has been a standard ploy by most occupations seeking to professionalize in the 20th century. Thus our point in this first siting is to depict the emergence of this characteristic discourse as a selective tradition that privileges a technically rational understanding of adult education and to understand how such discourse will come to manage our understanding of planning theory.



## Siting II: Planning Theory's "Rational Roots"--The Emergence and Continuing Dominance of Technical Planning Models from the 1950s on

In this section we argue that planning theory emerges from the professionalization movement's dependence on science to improve practice. Given the mainstream activities of the field, represented by the intensive Carnegie-AAAE efforts to define the field through research yet remain "directly in the middle of the road" (Cartwright, 1935, p. 21) with respect to the social agenda of adult education (which is itself a manifestation of a technocratic interest), it is not surprising that the planning theory itself should come to represent a technical activity of applying general planning principles to practice. So in this section we demonstrate how technical planning theory emerges in the 1930s, becomes codified in the 1950s, and continues thereafter virtually unchanged in terms of its scientific assumptions and procedural logic.

Very early we can see the roots of this discourse. Arguably, Lindeman, because of his strong connections to Dewey's progressive thinking and its profound faith in scientific method, provides the first evidence for an emerging theory of planning. In rejecting a subject-based pedagogy in order to promote adult education as learner-centered, he states as a central tenet of the meaning of adult education that "the curriculum is built around the student's needs and interests" (1926, p. 6). This planning principle has continued ever since to center planning theory discourse. Bryson actually provides an inchoate form of technical planning procedures in his 1936 text on adult education in which he argues that adult educators "must attend to the planning and details of administration" (1936, p. 117). His concern in addressing management and administration at that time has echoed consistently for 60 years: "Most people responsible for adult programs . . . are not in any sense trained managers" which requires "special professional knowledge" (p. 118). There are three tasks in Bryson's theory of planning. First, managers must attend to the comfort of adult learners (an appropriate precursor to Knowles' notions of physiological and psychological climate). Second, he argues that while "it is part of our general theory of adult education that men and women take part in it because of their own felt needs. Promotion is necessary, nevertheless" (p. 119). Finally, even though he warns planners about the difficulty of depending solely on learners' expressed needs as a basis for planning, Bryson promotes the selective tradition orthodoxy that educators must "discover" learner needs and interests as a basis for making decisions about offering programs. Likewise, Beals and Brody (1941) in their survey of adult education literature provide a section about systematically ascertaining the needs of adults.

Knowles (1980) says that before 1950 adult educators had no theory to support their practice so they relied on intuition and experience. We are suggesting, however, that educators did have theories about planning adult education and that they were direct precursors to the technical rational theory so conventional today. Indeed, Knowles' (1950) Informal Adult Education is not a primitive attempt to theorize planning practice but rather a mature statement of planning theory, one that represents the codification of planning principles that will dominate the procedural discourse of planning theory for the next 40 years. Knowles directly represents the selective tradition of technical rationality that has been building since the 1920s:

... the existing literature of adult education [is] excellent for general theory and background but provides few answers to such practical problems as how to start a program, what steps to take in building a sound organization, what methods work best in given situations, how to attract and interest participants, and how to measure results. There are good reasons for this gap in resource materials. The adult education movement has rightly been concerned, until now, with setting its goals and mapping its course. Principles and techniques of operation, developed through trial and error, have not been sufficiently tested to justify putting them down in black and white. The time has come, however, to make a beginning in formulating good principles and good practices, and submitting them to the test of experience. (1950, p. viii)

Note clearly the use of the logic and language consistent with the technical rational tradition in adult education. Note just as clearly that not only is Knowles very sure of what the problem is (the "gap" between theory and practice, the perennial practical weakness of this rationalist epistemology) but also sure of how to respond: testing "principles and techniques of operation." Our point, of course, is that without the previous 25 years of discussion using this very same language, Knowles would not even be able to frame his question and response in the technical rational discourse that he does here. In subtle contradiction to his decrying a lack of theory, this discussion leads directly to the key statement of professional interest in that his book "attempts to bring together into a systematic statement some of the principles and techniques that have seemed to be successful under a variety of circumstances" (1950, p. viii) and continues to promote the needs-centered theory first expounded by Lindeman nearly 25 years earlier: "For without knowing the facts about the needs of the community and the interests of people, sound planning is not possible" which is "very helpful in determining the objectives and content of the program" (p. 178) which is the "next logical step" (p. 182). Thus Knowles writes a refined version of Bryson's 1936 textbook on adult education in which he devotes major sections to adult education planning theory focused on determining needs, stating objectives, planning instruction, promoting, financing, and evaluating, all of which depend upon a combination of Tylerian curriculum design procedures and consumerist adult education practice. This pattern of discourse barely varies from then on. The important point in this respect is that Knowles' (1950) work represents a mature version of planning theory because it depends upon the essential scientific discourse that lies at the heart of all adult education planning theory. If Knowles in 1950 represents the clear ascendancy of a technical rational discourse in planning theory, then London in 1960 represents its dominance in such a way that cements the logic and assumptions of technical rationality in planning theory. Citing his survey of adult education planners, he concludes that "there appears to be a remarkable consistency among adult educators as to the formal steps in program development" (1960, p. 66).

If there is any doubt about the dominance of this discourse in forming a selective tradition of technical planning theory, Sork and Buskey's (1986) review of the planning literature between 1950 and 1983 shows that a "generic planning model composed of nine specific steps" (1986, p. 89) can be used to represent the theoretical and procedural similarity of these models which "vary more due to contextual differences than substantive differences" (p. 93). In other words, the selective tradition of technical rationality has so effectively managed the discourse of planning

theory that the analysis at this point is not about the scientific and procedural logic of planning theory itself, but rather about the specification of discrete tasks. Thus the apparent variety of planning models from the 1950s through the 1980s is more figurative than real, for the theories vary only in detail, not in technical rational logic. We believe it is significant to note that there is no analysis of the theoretical groundwork of planning models themselves, to the extent that the central step-wise discourse depicted so powerfully by Tyler (1949) no longer even needs mentioning. So the technical rational procedural logic codified in Knowles' (1950) work and clearly ascendant by the 1960s remains the dominant discourse, even as Sork and Buskey remind us that we should analyze "the theoretical propositions or assumptions underlying a particular approach to planning" (p. 89). Even with the keen and growing awareness of situational practice, adult education planning theory discourse continues to privilege the professionalization interest of improving practice through scientific principle (e.g., Sork & Caffarella, 1989).

### Siting III: The Oppositional Movement's Failure to Theorize Practice As Planning

Although we lack the space to develop this position, the third siting of planning theory focuses on the emergence in the last 20 years of two related movements. One is the emergence of transformational learning theory. With direct roots in the work of Horton and Freire, contemporary proponents (such as Mezirow, Brookfield, and Hart) promote the adult educator as critical facilitator. The revisionist historical movement's attempt to reclaim the social action purpose of adult education represents another oppositional branch of contemporary practice (e.g., Cunningham and Welton). Our argument is that neither of these movements has "theorized" adult education as planning practice.

In closing we point out that while the literature continues to grow more sophisticated in enumerating planning tasks, the discourse itself remains the same. Beginning with embryonic procedural formulations in the 1930s, adult education discourse about planning theory rapidly embraced the scientific proceduralism of the general curriculum field in the 1950s to the extent that by the 1980s the technical rational selective tradition has so effectively managed planning theory discourse that we really have no other way of talking about planning theory. Technical rationality continues to be the privileged theoretical orientation even as theoretical and empirical evidence mounts to note its limitations in understanding or improving practice. Thus we argue that our understanding of planning "theory" itself has not effectively changed in over 50 years which effectively demonstrates the power of the selective tradition of technical rationality in managing the discourse of planning theory.

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## The Effects of Group Cohesion On The Productivity Of Advisory Groups That Plan Employee Training Programs In A University Setting

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**Abstract:** Advisory groups are one important method that adult educators can use to plan programs. This study's purpose was to determine if a relationship existed between group cohesiveness and productivity in advisory groups that plan training programs. The major finding indicated that there was a significant relationship between these two variables.

### Introduction

The concept of including the adult learner in the planning of educational activities is not a new idea in adult education. Advisory groups are one important method for involving learners in this process. Both Knowles (1980) and Boyle (1981) encourage adult educators in organizations to make use of representative groups in this planning process. The major functions of these groups in program planning can include assessing participants' learning needs, establishing learning objectives, designing learning experiences, marketing programs and evaluating outcomes. Knowles (1980) concludes that one of the "most pronounced trends in educational practices in schools, universities, industry and adult education programs in community agencies in the past two decades has been the increasing use of small groups in planning programs" (p. 101).

Despite the use of advisory groups in these various organizational environments, Vedros (1985) comments that there is "a void in the research concerning the development and use of educational programs that involve adults in the planning and decision making processes of these activities" (p. 27). Major adult education program planning experts such as Houle, Sork and Hiemstra have not specifically addressed these research issues. Rather, much of the present literature on advisory groups have originated from "the group dynamics research of Bales and his associates" (Boyle, 1981, p. 97). The adult education profession has adopted and applied these findings to program planning groups without conducting investigatory research into their unique settings.

A critical issue for educators who facilitate advisory groups in program planning is to ensure that the groups are productive or that they achieve their goals. The small group literature reveals that group cohesion is a critical variable in determining a group's effectiveness or productivity. This relationship is based on the assumption that "high cohesion facilitates or enhances group productivity while the lack of it constrains or limits productivity" (Greene, 1989, p. 70). Similarly, Goodman, Rawlin and Schminke (1987) state that "in any discussion of groups and productivity, cohesiveness is a central concept" (p. 144). Evans and Dion (1991) conducted a meta-analysis of published studies investigating the relationship between group

cohesiveness and productivity. Their conclusion revealed that 16 studies showed a moderately strong and positive relationship between these two variables. However, one major criticism of the small group research focusing on group cohesiveness and productivity is that the studies have been conducted in experimental settings with college students, military personnel and members of sports teams. The applicability of the studies to "real world" organizations are questionable.

This current research situation presents a unique opportunity for adult education researchers to critically examine the small group research about the cohesion-productivity relationship and to test this relationship in a "real world" organization, i.e., advisory groups who plan employee training programs in a higher education environment. The specific research question that was addressed in this study was: What effect does group cohesion have on the productivity of advisory groups who plan employee training in a small university?

### Method

The study's sample consisted of 11 advisory groups that plan employee training programs for approximately 420 staff members at a small state university in rural central Pennsylvania. Each advisory group consisted of 5 to 11 members. The total number of participants in this study was 74 individuals. These volunteer group members meet once a month to plan non-faculty training and have been planning programs for five or more years. The university environment in which these groups plan programs is very supportive, i.e., release time for group members and program budgets.

The independent variable in this study was group cohesiveness. It was conceptualized as a multidimensional construct consisting of two components: task-based and interpersonal cohesion. Recent studies have shown a positive relationship between cohesion and productivity when the multidimensional definition of cohesion was used (Zaccaro and McCoy, 1988; Zaccaro, 1990; and Zaccaro and Lowe, 1987). The first component in the multidimensional definition is task-based cohesion or the group members' commitment to task. It was measured by a modified version of the Organization Commitment Questionnaire (Mauday, Steers and Porter, 1979). Interpersonal cohesion or the degree to which positive interpersonal relationships exist among group members was measured by the Group Cohesiveness Scale (Dobbins and Zaccaro, 1986). The dependent variable was group productivity or "the output from a group's task dimension" (Fisher and Ellis, 1990, p. 32). A four item index was created to measure productivity. These items included meeting time deadlines, the number of programs planned, participants' evaluations of the programs and the office of continuing education's accreditation of the programs.

The data in this investigation was analyzed using the Fisher's Exact Test of Significance. This nonparametric statistical procedure is used when the sample size is less than 20 and when the scores from the two independent samples all fall into one or the other of two mutually exclusive classes. The .05 level of significance was used in this study.

## Results

The three major findings in this investigation were:

1. There were significant differences in the task-based and interpersonal cohesion scores of advisory groups who achieved high levels of productivity in planning programs and those groups that achieved low levels of productivity in these tasks ( $p < .05$ ).
2. Groups with low interpersonal cohesion had low task-based cohesion scores while groups with high interpersonal cohesion scores had high task-based scores ( $p = .02424$ ).
3. There were significant differences in the task-based scores of advisory groups that achieved high levels of productivity in planning programs and those groups that achieved low levels of productivity ( $p = .024$ ). A significant difference was also noted in the interpersonal cohesion scores of the advisory groups and their productivity levels ( $p = .003$ ).

## Discussion

An analysis of the data in this study indicated that there were significant differences in the task-based and interpersonal scores of advisory groups who achieved high levels of productivity in planning programs and those groups who achieved low levels in these tasks. However, separate analyses of the task-based and interpersonal group scores also showed that these two types of cohesion were individually and positively related to the advisory groups' productivity levels. This latter finding raises questions about operationalizing cohesion as a multidimensional concept in natural and permanent groups.

Zaccaro (1990) believes that this finding might have occurred in these natural groups because "the development of task-based cohesion in permanent groups is likely to be entwined with that of interpersonal cohesion . . . task-based cohesion represents a shared orientation to the group task, its nurturance may prompt increased member liking in successful, ongoing groups. This view would make the distinction between the two forms of cohesion more tenuous" (p. 389). Levine and Moreland (1990) explained the interaction of task-based and interpersonal cohesion by asserting members maintain membership in groups for a variety of reasons, i.e., they enjoy its activities, believe in its goals, like the members themselves or enjoy the feeling of accomplishing the group's task. This explanation indicates that group participation may not be based on one of these factors but on the interactions of several of these reasons. Although theorists are emphasizing the importance of this interaction, the small group research focusing on the relationship between interpersonal and task-based cohesion and its effects on productivity is virtually nonexistent.

## Implications

Adult educators can enhance future group cohesion-productivity research by focusing on three critical issues discovered in the course of this investigation. First, since this

study was conducted in a university setting, future research needs to expand natural group studies to other types and sizes of organizations across the nation. In addition, both supportive and nonsupportive organizational cultures should be investigated to enhance the applicability of the findings to other institutional settings. Second, a new and creative approach to investigate group cohesiveness and its effects on productivity should be implemented since a majority of the studies use quantitative research designs. A qualitative approach could help group investigators to understand how important interpersonal and task-based cohesion are in determining the meanings that participants assign to these concepts in group settings. Finally, researchers need to critically re-examine the multidimensional concept of cohesion through future studies. This research must center on the relationship between task-based and interpersonal cohesion and its possible effects on productivity.

An important practical implication of the findings in this study is the need for group facilitators and members to promote both task-based and interpersonal cohesion in order to impact the groups' productivity levels. Specific actions that can help to positively impact group cohesion include:

1. To use the "group processing" technique in group meetings to clarify how effectively members are working together (Johnson and Johnson, 1991).
2. To implement task and social skills training for group members on a continuing basis (Lew, Mensch, Johnson and Johnson, 1986).
3. To develop a recruitment and selection process for group members to determine their commitment to the group's goals and their ability to interact with other individuals.

This brief list certainly is not an exhaustive list but should serve as a catalyst to promote critical reflection about other creative techniques to promote group cohesion.

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## EXPLAINING AND PREDICTING PARTICIPATION IN ADULT EDUCATION: A LONGITUDINAL STUDY

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**Abstract:** Few studies and theoretical frameworks have treated participation in adult education from a longitudinal perspective. This paper presents a model which posits that PAE is embedded in the adult developmental process and is the interactive result of individual internal and external forces. The model was tested on a national sampled data set.

Although adult education participation has been studied extensively for the past several decades, our knowledge about participation in adult education (PAE) is surprisingly limited. Nearly all the previous studies have examined adult education participation in a cross-sectional design, leaving unanswered how adult education participation affects and is affected by personal and social factors across the life span. Shortcomings in the research include ambiguous definition of variables, lack of longitudinal study for examining participation as an adult developmental process, lack of a representative sample of adults for generalizing conclusions to the adult population, and lack of a strong theoretical model that explains the mechanism of participation. Researchers in the field of adult education continue to formulate theories to explain and predict participation in adult education. Unfortunately, few of them have received consistent attention in the literature or provided strong empirical evidence of support (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991).

The paucity of longitudinal research in the literature limits our understanding of adult education participation as a phenomenon embedded in the adult development process. Problems related to the differential effects of family background, personal psychological variables, and social factors, are best examined through longitudinal research design. To answer questions about the ways in which adults form their attitudes toward education and the interaction between attitude and participation behavior—which are essentially developmental questions—requires a longitudinal design. Thus, we can follow individual adults as they move from preadult and early adulthood experiences to a more mature adult age. Longitudinal designs are also needed to examine the interactive effects of psychological, family, and social contextual variables on education participation. The paucity of strong predictor variables might be caused by the use of cross-sectional research designs. This study presents a theoretical framework of PAE established on the literature and investigates the proposed framework using data from a national longitudinal survey.

### Building a Dynamic Model of Participation

The building of a theoretical model needs to be grounded in other related theories and empirical findings in the literature. Fortunately, the field of adult education has placed high interest on how and why adults become involved in adult and continuing education activities and there is extensive literature on PAE. Studies in adult education participation can be characterized as being based on psychological and/or sociological approaches.

Studies within the psychological camp are diverse and one of the influential approaches is motivational orientation. This approach has strongly emphasized identifying learners' type, and motivational orientations (Boshier, 1973, 1976, 1991; Burgess, 1971). Studies of deterrents focus on the underlying structure of many

barriers perceived by adults as reasons for non-participation (Darkenwald & Valentine, 1985). More recent approaches have investigated the effects of adults attitude toward education. It has been suggested that attitude is one of the important predictors of participation (Darkenwald & Hayes, 1988; Yang, Blunt & Butler, 1994).

Other approaches based on a sociological perspective focus on social contextual factors rather than internal psychological variables, arguing the former are more important than the latter. Findings in this stream of study suggest that adults from low socioeconomic classes fail to participate in adult education which is determined by the dominant culture (Jarvis, 1983; Merriam & Caffarella, 1991; Quigley, 1990). From sociological perspectives the argument is logically sound, but the empirical studies failed to show the significant effects of social demographic variables on PAE (Cross, 1981; Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982; Merriam & Caffarella, 1991).

Substantial effort has been made to synthesize the empirical findings and establish conceptual models. Merriam and Caffarella (1991) identified several conceptual models that contain the greatest potential in PAE research. Although these models appear to have some commonalties as identified by Courtney (1992) and Merriam and Caffarella (1991), they address the predictor variables differently. Congruence model (Boshier, 1973) treats cognitive incongruence as a major predictor for the PAE, while acknowledging that the incongruence is the result of interaction between internal and external factors. COR model (Cross, 1981) posits that PAE is the result of a chain of responses to both psychological and external variables. Darkenwald and Merriam's (1982) model places social contexts as the foremost important predictors for the PAE and is the only one has longitudinal implications where SES and family characteristics are heavily emphasized. The ISSTAL model by Cookson (1986) is perhaps the most comprehensive and complex framework for the PAE. In this framework, the interactions among individual variables such as personality traits and attitudinal dispositions mediate external contexts, social background and situational variables. In general, the variables in the previous theoretical models of PAE are fragmented and few of these models have been empirically tested.

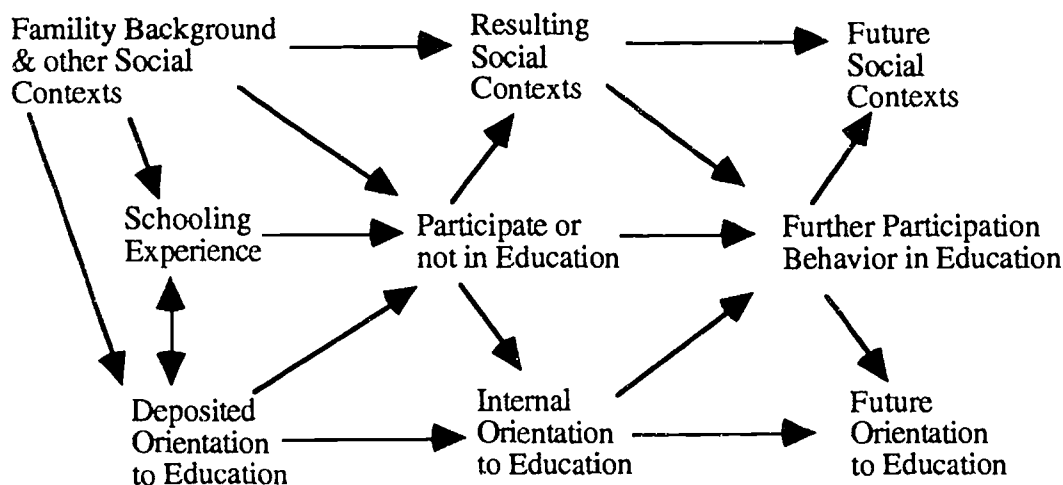


Figure 1. A dynamic model of adult education participation

Figure 1 presents a dynamic model of PAE which posits that participation in learning activity is the interactive result of individual internal variables and external contextual factors. Moreover, it is suggested that PAE should be studied from a developmental perspective. Three clusters of variables are included: internal orientation to education, participation behavior in education, and external contexts. Here, internal orientation toward education refers to individual mental state with regard to the education along a positive vs. negative line. This construct is similar to the one proposed by Courtney (1992, p. 80) who observed that a single psychological reality (termed as orientation towards learning) might well represent different constructs in the previous PAE models such as "perceived value of education", "attitudinal dispositions", and "attitudes about education." This variable is influenced by several psychological variables such as attitude toward education, motivations, and personality traits. The second cluster represents adults educational experience, reflecting whether they participate in education or not, to what extent they have been involved in the learning. The third cluster of variables indicates external environmental stimuli that have motivational or deterrent effects on the PAE. Variables included in this cluster are: SES, social and cultural norms, experiences, information, opportunities and barriers.

Because the model presented here is not a simple listing of variables, it is important to explore/confirm the interrelations among the variables. PAE is an individual as well as a social activity embedded in the life developmental process. Therefore, any adequate theoretical formulation of PAE must start with preadult factors. Here family background and other related social factors are viewed as the starting variable which has effects on other preadult factors and the PAE in adulthood. Generally speaking, positive family background (e.g., high SES) related to education will result in schooling experience and orientation toward education in the preadult age at the same direction. It is recognized that adults schooling experience interacts with their orientation to education. All of the three preadult factors have significant impacts on the PAE in the adulthood. On the other hand, positive experience in adult learning is likely to bring about positive orientation toward education and consequent positive social contexts such as good income and opportunity to access education (e.g., more education results in higher SES). Variables within each of the three clusters are positively related. In this regard, orientation to education is a function of internal variables, say, motivation, attitude toward education, and personalities, to list a few.

## Methods

### The Data Base

The data used in this study were drawn from the National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS). The NLS study consists of longitudinal data collected in the spring of 1972 by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) from a sample 16,683 seniors in 1,070 public and private high schools within the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Follow-up studies via mail questionnaires and telephone interviews were conducted in the fall of 1973, 1974, 1976, and 1986. When the 1986 survey was undertaken, the respondents were approximately 32 years old. It should be noted that about one quarter of the 18-year-old students who did not reach their senior year were not included in the study. Detailed discussions of the NLS data set can be found in Riccobono, Henderson, Burkheimer, Place, and



Levinsohn (1981) and Tourangeau, Sebring, Campbell, Glusberg, Spencer, and Singleton (1987).

The NLS data set has generated rich studies and few of them have focused on participation in education. Peng and Feters (1978) and Munro (1981) investigated the variables influencing dropout from secondary education. Using the same data set, Cervero and Kirkpatrick (1990) examined the relation between participation in adult education programs and preadult factors. It is concluded that participants and non-participants were significantly different from each other in terms of father's level of education, type of high school program, and high school class rank.

### Conceptualization and Variable Specifications

The proposed model of PAE posits that participation phenomena can be best understood as a dynamic process between internal and external learning forces. To test this dynamic model, the variables in the model were constructed from the NLS data set. However, not all variables in the model were able to be constructed from the questions in the NLS survey. Efforts were made to include, as much as possible, items that are relevant to meaningful constructs in the proposed model while maintaining a parsimonious structure of the model. The proposed model was then modified according to the contexts of the NLS, and the modified model is presented in Figure 2. Variables in this study were constructed from base-year data and two follow-up surveys (1979 and 1986), in order to examine the longitudinal relationships within seven year periods. The rationale for including these variables and their measurement were as follows:

1. Socioeconomic Status (SES). SES was constructed by the NCES researchers using five indicators: father's education, mother's education, parental income, father's occupation, and a household items index. Factor analysis revealed a common factor with approximately equal loadings for each of the five components. The composite scores were coded as low, middle, and high SES. The SES was included in this study, since it is a major indicator of family background and has been suggested as a good predictor for the PAE (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982).

2. Schooling Experience. This variable was included because educational experiences in preadulthood have enduring effect on the PAE (Cervero & Kirkpatrick, 1990; Quigley, 1990). The variable was constructed from two items: one was students' percentile rank in the class, and the other was high school grade, both were obtained from the school record information.

3. Attitude toward Education. This variable has been explicitly used by Cross (1981) and implicitly by Cookson (1986). Research has suggested that attitude plays an important role in predicting participation (Yang, Blunt, & Butler, 1994). Here attitude toward education is defined as adults' mental tendency about learning in organized education activity. Two items were used: the first one was educational aspiration (the level of education that the respondents planned to attain), the second was a question asking the respondents about the importance of having a good education in life and with three categories ranging from not important to very important.

4. Self-Evaluation. This variable indicates adults personality characteristics and has been included in the previous PAE models (Cookson, 1986; Cross, 1981). Research has shown that this variable is relatively stable and plays an important role in achievement motivation. Eight items to measure personality were included in the questionnaires and factor analysis results suggested two constructs for the

personality: locus of control and self-esteem, each retained four items (Riccobono et al. 1981).

5. Participation in Adult Education (PAE). PAE is adults' behavior of attendance in education activity and was constructed based on two measures. The first measure, credit adult education, was developed from responses to the survey question, "Since [the last survey], have you attended and taken classes at any school such as a college or university, graduate or professional school, service academy or school, business school, trade school, technical institute, vocational school, community college, and so forth?" The second, measure, non-credit adult education, was developed from a similar question, "Since [the last survey], have you participated in any program such as on-the-job training, registered apprenticeships, government training programs, personal enrichment, or correspondence courses?" The reported participation rate in the NLS study was higher than that in other national surveys, and this discrepancy might be due to the longer time period for the questions of PAE in the NLS (see Cervero & Kirkpatrick, 1990).

### Data Analysis

Structural equation modeling technique was used in this study and it is especially appropriate for the longitudinal data and for examining interrelationships among a set of variables while taking into account measurement error. This technique can also test how well the theoretical framework fits the empirical data by examining the correspondence between the covariance matrix of the data set and that of variables hypothesized by the theory for the population. Analyses were based on the LISREL 7 (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1989) program, and were conducted in three stages. First, measurement models were formulated and tested for each of the constructs in the postulated PAE model. These analyses were needed to test the measurement adequacy and explore the possible items in the NLS questionnaires to be included as indicators for each of the constructs. Second, three structural equation models were formulated and tested for three time periods. Based on the satisfactory results in the previous two stages, a structural equation model was derived and tested with the combination of the constructs from different time periods. Because of space limitations, only the results for the final model in the third stage are reported.

### Results and Discussion

A total number of 7,069 respondents answered all questions used for the constructs in the final model and thus served as the sample of the study. The overall chi-squared test of the model was statistically significant,  $\chi^2(131) = 2709.63$ ,  $p < .01$ . However, in case of large sample sizes, reliance on fit indices such as goodness-fit-index (GFI) and root mean squared residuals (RMSR) is more appropriate than on the chi-squared significance level (Bollen, 1989; Joreskog & Sorbom, 1989). The GFI indicates the proportion of the joint amount of variance and covariance of the data that can be accounted for by the model being tested. The RMSR represents the square root of the mean of squared residuals between covariance matrix of the data and that implied by the model. For the current data set, GFI is .959 and RMSR equals .40. The GFI adjusted for the degrees of freedom is .940, suggesting a very good level of model fit. Also, the total coefficient of determination for endogenous variables was .997, indicating that the observed indicators had jointly formed a very good measurement instrument for the latent variables.

To assist with the clarity of linkage between particular indicators and each latent construct, the factor loadings are presented in Table 1. Two psychological constructs, self-evaluation and attitude toward education, seem to have reliable measures across time. Four-item measure of locus of control had consistently higher loadings than the measures on self-esteem, indicating that the measures on the locus of control are more reliable than that on the self-esteem, with regard to the current theoretical framework of PAE. Nevertheless, loadings of two indicators for attitude to education changed significantly across time. More specifically, two indicators, "educational aspiration" and "importance of education", were homogeneous measures for the construct of attitude to education in the base-year survey. But the "importance of education" tended to be a more reliable measure for the construct when the respondents entered into adulthood. Participation in adult education (PAE) was constructed from two items in the 1979 and 1986 surveys respectively. The magnitude of the loadings showed a consistent pattern for these two measures, i.e., report of participation in a credit program had significantly larger loadings than in a non-credit program on PAE. Clearly, the construct of PAE used in this study is more a reflection of adults' participation behavior in credit adult education programs than non-credit programs.

Table 1. Factor Loading Estimates for Measures Across Three Time Periods

Construct/ Indicator	Factor Loadings <sup>a</sup>		
	Preadult	1979	1986
1. Self-Evaluation			
Self-Esteem	.300	.361	.420
Locus of Control	.656	.668	.704
2. Attitude to Education			
Educational Aspiration	.646	.369	.295
Importance of Education	.612	.915	.451
3. PAE			
Credit Program		.772	.711
Non-credit Program		.103	.103
4. Schooling Experience			
Percentile Rank in Class	.707		
High School Grade	.613		
5. Socioeconomic Status (SES)			
Composite Score of SES <sup>b</sup>	.922		

Note. <sup>a</sup>Standardized solution. <sup>b</sup>An initial reliability estimate of .85 was imputed for SES

Figure 2 shows estimates of the structural coefficients for the final model. Each of these coefficients can be viewed as a standardized regression coefficient of one exogenous variable on its related endogenous variable when the effects of other variables were partialled out. Overall, most of the path coefficients are statistically significant and positive in direction. The results indicated that preadult characteristics, operationalized as SES, schooling experience, self-evaluation, and attitude toward education when the respondents were in high school, had significant effects on subsequent self-evaluation, attitude toward education, and participation behavior in adult education. However, their contributions to PAE in later adulthood were quite different. SES and attitude toward education measured in preadult age had consistent and significant impacts on PAE. It was surprising to find that the direct impacts of schooling and self-evaluation on PAE measured in 1979 were

negative, though the influence was very small. This result might be explained by the fact that 1979 PAE really reflected the respondents' enrollment in formal education institute in at age 22 to 25. Those who had very positive self-evaluation and good high school performance were less likely to stay in a post secondary education institute in early adulthood, given the assumption that variables of SES and attitude toward education were hold as constant. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the total effect of the schooling experience on the PAE reported in 1979 was positive because the it had a positive indirect effect on PAE through attitude towards education. In sum, SES, schooling experience, and attitude toward education had significant effects on PAE reported in 1979, while self-evaluation had less effect. This pattern was holds true when examining the effects of variables measured in 1979 on the PAE of 1986. Specifically, previous PAE and attitude toward education significantly influenced the PAE reported in 1986, but self-evaluation had no direct effect.

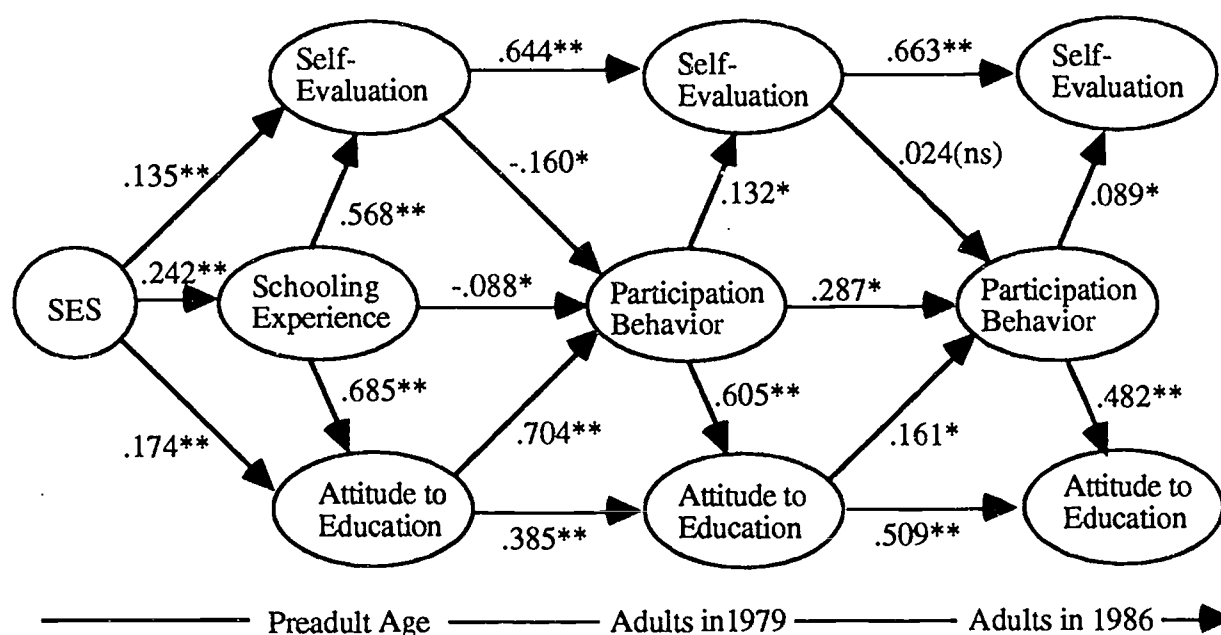


Figure 2. An empirical model of adult education participation with structural coefficients (\* p < .05. \*\* p < .01).

On the other hand, it is important to note how two psychological variables, self-evaluation and attitude toward education, are influenced by other variables. Measured in their preadult age, the respondents' self-evaluation and attitude toward education were almost homogeneously shaped by SES and schooling experience. However, self-evaluation remained relatively stable and little impact of the PAE on it was found. In contrast, attitude toward education had been significantly affected by education experiences and it was more changeable in terms of measures at three occasions in the 14-year period. With regard to the variance of the PAE accounted for by other variables, the squared multiple correlation for structural variable PAE of 1979 was .300, and .233 for that of 1986. Similarly, when operationalized as a construct, 30% and 23% of the variance of participation in adult education during the two periods were explained by the proposed PAE model.



### Conclusion

This study supported the notion that PAE is a social phenomenon embedded in the adult developmental process, though the decision of participation is individual and voluntary (Courtney, 1992). The study revealed that SES and schooling experience had significant enduring effects on PAE. Adults attitude to education is changeable than personality trait (measured on self-esteem and locus of control) throughout the 14-year period when the data was sought. On the other hand, the relationship between PAE and attitude was much stronger than that with personality.

Although FAE is a heavily studied area in the field of adult education and several theoretical frameworks have been proposed, few of these theories have been empirically tested. Nearly all previous studies have examined PAE in a cross-sectional design, which leaves unanswered how PAE affects, and is affected by, personal and social factors across the life span. This study contributes to the knowledge base of PAE by discovering the relative importance of the variables to the participation with a nationally sampled data. The longitudinal effects of preadult characteristics on PAE were examined. The results indicated that the proposed model of PAE fitted empirical data very well.

(Note: References are available upon request)

## WOMEN'S ISSUES: UPWARD MOBILITY THROUGH ADULT EDUCATION

Jane Lee, Glenna Williams, Katie Barwick-Snell, Elizabeth Hayes and Bob Nolan

### ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the issue of access and opportunity for women to advance both educationally and economically in work and professional settings through non-formal education exemplified by mentorships and non credit programing, and through formal education as exemplified by non-traditional students in higher education. The approaches to these issues will be through three separate theoretical perspectives. One perspective derives from Darkenwald, Scanlan, Valentine and Hayes who studied deterrents to participation. Another perspective derives from Rice's work on the access of welfare women to higher education. A final perspective comes from Riley and Wrench who assert that women, in general, are denied the opportunity for mentoring relationships so often given to men in the workplace. Hence the papers address the upward mobility of women in the workplace, in rural communities and in higher education.

The first of our three papers addresses the access of women employees to mentoring in the workplace. This study was conducted among 392 women administrators in the Southern Region of the Cooperative Extension Service, a district made up of 13 contiguous states from Florida to Texas and south of the Mason-Dixon line. The problem addressed by this study was described by Kram and Isabella (1985) as follows: because women in administrative and supervisory positions are relatively scarce, and because men are often unwilling to provide mentoring relationships to women due to perceived risk, women frequently resort to peer relationships as a way to navigate career advancement (also, see Noe, 1988). Closely related to this perspective, are the findings of Kram (1985); Riley & Wrench (1985) and Ragins and Sundstrom (1992) who claimed that mentoring relationships were significant factors in career development, organizational success, and career satisfaction.

The research questions were as follows: Did women administrators in Cooperative Extension service have mentors? In what ways have the mentors or peer workers been supportive in the advancement of the respondent's career? How do women administrators describe their mentoring experiences?

*Methology:* The population was composed of female adminsitratrs in the Southern Region of Cooperative Extension Service. The population included women holding job titles such as County or Unit Director, County Coordinator; District or State Director; Associate Director, Assistant Director or Interim Director. The entire population was sent a mailed survey instrument with a cover letter on the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service letterhead. Across the Southern Region 6470 professionals are employed in Cooperative Extension of whom 62% are men, 38% women. Adminsitratrs with the titles described above total 1514 of whom 72% are males, 28% females. It's easy to see by these figures that women are underrepresented in administrative roles within Cooperative Extension in the

Southern Region. Only women administrators were sent surveys. An initial mailing of 392 surveys and a follow-up mailing of 133 surveys to non-respondents 30 days after the initial mailing yielded a response of 300 completed surveys for a response rate of 76.5%. There were no second mailings and no effort to contact the non-respondents.

*Results:* Preliminary results show that 74.6% of the respondents had not participated in formal or facilitated mentoring programs, although they reported having received mentoring support from one or more persons throughout their careers. Ninety-two percent of the supportive mentoring relationships were described as spontaneously formed on the basis of friendship rather than job status, with 20% of the relationships (the largest number) lasting eight to ten years. Sixty-eight percent of the mentors were also female and 78% were older than their proteges. Although 92% of those surveyed described their mentoring relationships as spontaneous, 85% either agreed or strongly agreed that a voluntary formal mentoring program should be instituted within the Cooperative Extension system to assist the advancement of women in their careers.

Respondents described the mentoring they had received as mainly interpersonal based on friendships rather than on work roles. Categories of responses describing organizational roles such as "Shares information about the organization" were not highly ranked or described as frequently as where items addressing more interpersonal issues such as "Cares about me as a person" which was ranked high by 90% of the respondents as a characteristic of their mentors. Other descriptors of mentors which appear to address this underlying theme of personal relationships include, "Acknowledges me as an accepted member of my profession," "Had a positive influence on my self-confidence," and "Encourages me to have high expectations of myself."

Survey items which described relationships of power and political influence were acknowledged as playing a minimal part in the mentoring experiences of this group of women. These descriptors included, "Introduced me to important people," "Used his or her influence to advance my career," and "Utilized organizational politics and power on my behalf." This latter finding seems to indicate that gender is not only an influence on the kind of access one has to mentoring but also an influence on the kinds of benefits one receives from the mentoring experience. This apparent gender relationship needs to be investigated more closely in future studies since this study did not compare men and women's experiences.

*Conclusions:* The findings of this study suggest that women in Cooperative Extension in the Southern Region experienced mentoring relationships on the basis of friendship and interpersonal qualities rather than organizational and functional relationships. Strictly functional assistance such as giving objective feedback and information about the organization or about technical aspects of the job were not reported as having been received as much as interpersonal support. On the other hand, women in this sample sought organizational information, but did not receive it to the degree they wanted. It is not that women in this study revealed themselves to be apolitical, but that they were not given little access to the political structure. Another important conclusion is that women in this sample compensated for a lack of formal mentoring from supervisors by choosing informal mentoring relationships with peers within the organization with whom they forged lasting relationships and that these latter were important influences on their professional advancement.

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The second of our three studies addresses the deterrents to participation in non-formal adult education of rural low-income women.

*Theoretical Perspective:* Several theoretical perspectives undergird this study. Luttrell (1989) maintained that participation in adult education runs counter to the powerful influences of the working-class culture of poor women because book learning and intellectual work are not a valued part of that culture. Moreover, the act of participation in adult education forces working-class women to confront the unequal balance of power in their lives. Luttrell (1989) concluded that adult educators do not fully understand the radical emotional transformation that working women go through to participate in adult education. A second perspective was proposed by Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1986) who maintained that women view and utilize formal and non-formal education from systems of interdependencies, relationships and networks; hence they require confirmation and community before engaging in education, as opposed to men who view confirmation and community as a result of education. Consequently, the typical individually oriented adult education program may be antagonistic to a woman's way of knowing and defining herself (Kazemek, 1988). A third perspective undergirding this study comes from Hart, Karlovie, and Meyer (1992) who described adult education as being androcentric as a field of practice and as a field of theory. They challenge the assumption that adult education research is gender-neutral and that the conclusions from such research can be equally applied to men and women. This study has been conducted to inform adult educators interested in promoting a more gynocentric approach to adult education.

*Methodology:* Data was collected by means of two instruments: Deterrents to Participation Scale-Non-Formal or DPS-NF and the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI). The DPS-NF was adapted from the DPS-LL developed by Hayes and Darkenwald (1988), the DPS-G developed by Darkenwald and Valentine (1985) and an instrument developed by Beder (1990) to survey adult basic education eligible non-participants. Comparing all three instruments insured that all relevant factors related to deterrents were included (Sudman and Bradburn, 1982). Several of the items on the DPS-NF do not match any of the questions from the three instruments, but are based on a qualitative study by Ziegahn (1992). As a second step in establishing content validity DPS-NF was submitted to an expert jury which also reviewed an oral interview schedule addressing various demographics. A third check on content validity was to compare results of published studies on deterrents to the



results of this study. Reliability of the DPS-NF was determined with Cronbach's Alpha which yielded a coefficient of .868. Reliability of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory was determined by use Cronbach's Alpha which yielded a coefficient of .83. Both instruments were pilot tested for validity and reliability with a group of 15 AFDC women in Payne County Oklahoma.

The population of the study is defined as women below the poverty level living in 20 Oklahoma counties with populations of less than 100,000 and a poverty rate of 20% or greater for the last four U.S. censuses (forty years). The population is further defined as females, aged 35 or younger who are receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). The number of subjects needed to establish reliability for the principal components factor analysis was 180 persons. The number of subjects needed from each county was determined by a formula based on the county's 1993 monthly average AFDC caseload. The data was collected by administering the two instruments in small groups of 3 to 20 women attending meetings scheduled by the Oklahoma department of Health and Human Services. The researcher attended these meetings and presented to groups of AFDC recipients the opportunity to participate in the survey. AFDC eligibility was not affected in any way by their decision to participate and their participation was voluntary. Survey forms along with a consent form and instructions given by the investigator took from 30 to 45 minutes. Those completing both forms were given a five dollar gift certificate to a chain of ice-cream and dairy stores in Oklahoma.

*Results of the study:* The mean age of the sample was 26. Average number of children was 2 with the average age of the youngest child being 2 years old. Ethnic distribution included 70.2% white; 21.4% Native American; 7.1% African-American, 1.5% other. Subjects had been receiving AFDC benefits for an average of 23.5 months with the median being 13.5 months. Consequently the range of months as AFDC recipients was quite wide, from less than one month to 132 months. The mean education level was one year of post-secondary or post-GED education in either a vocational institute, or a community college. The mean score on the Coopersmith SEI was 58.5 out of a possible high score of 100 to a low score of 0 with a standard deviation of 20.9 indicating, again, a very wide range of scores (from 8 to 92). Higher scores on the Coopersmith SEI indicate a higher level of self-esteem. Comparable mean scores come from a study done in California among women attending community colleges and state universities. The California study reported a mean score of 71.6 with a standard deviation of 19.5. The average age of the California sample was 21.5.

Deterrents that were rated "somewhat true" or "true" by the 50% or more of the respondents included:

1. "I didn't know there were any workshops or programs offered."
2. "I can't afford the enrollment fee or the supplies required."
3. "I don't want to go by myself."
4. "I have never thought of going to a workshop/program."
5. "I can't go at the time the workshops/programs are offered."
6. "I don't like to leave my children."
7. "I don't think that I can go to all of the workshop sessions."

*Conclusions:* Although the counties studied have been poverty areas as defined by the U.S. census for the last 40 years and these counties are in a state reporting one of the lowest percapita incomes in the nation (43rd in percapita income), the initial findings of the study indicate that AFDC women in rural Oklahoma move in

and out of poverty and that rural poverty may not be the multigenerational issue identified in other parts of the country. It also seems that AFDC recipients in Oklahoma have not been sufficiently informed about community sponsored programs offered by agencies such as public libraries and the Cooperative Extension Services. Item 2 addressing costs of the program also revealed an ignorance of the way community adult education programs are conducted, since most of these programs do not charge fees. The counties studied also have access to vocational-technical institutes all of which conduct manpower programs sponsored by WIC, JPTA and Job Corps. Hence, ignorance of these opportunities relates more, perhaps, to the culture of the rural working class as described by Luttrell (1989) than to the institutional barrier related to the inability of community agencies to disseminate information to this population. This latter conclusion could be seen in the responses to the item, "I have never thought of going to a workshop/program." Finally, the item "I don't want to go by myself" may be related to self-concept, since more than 50% felt that going to a program where they did not know other people was an intimidating prospect deterring them from participation.

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The third of our papers addresses the access and use of social support systems by non-traditional women students in two large state supported research universities.

*Background of the Study:* For the last twenty years adult women, defined as women 25 years of age and over, have been returning to higher education in ever

increasing numbers to achieve personal and professional growth that promised them more opportunity in the marketplace. Higher Education has frequently been seen as an avenue of upward mobility, especially for female heads of household who make up proportionately the largest group in poverty in Oklahoma. For example, 57% of families headed by females with children under five years old have incomes below poverty level in Oklahoma (U. S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1993). Educational level and family income are closely linked. The median income of families headed by high school non-completers was \$22,000 in 1992; for high school completers it was \$34,000 and for college graduates it was \$57,000 (Economic Welfare and Educational Attainment, January, 1994). Women who have completed four years of college have a better chance of getting off AFDC than do high school graduates or women with two years of post-secondary training (Rice, 1993).

*Theoretical Perspective:* This study attempted to go beyond the middle-class focus of earlier studies on social support for women returning to school to determine the sources of social support for economically disadvantaged women. McCubbin, Patterson, Cook and Rossmann (1983) advocated family and community systems theory as a way to understand the social support women rely on to accomplish their career goals. Family systems theory helps one understand how changes such as a return to higher education rely on a complex set of social interactions taking place between the returning woman student and her family (Hooper, 1977). Social support is viewed by family practitioners as key to understanding those who are undergoing major life transitions such as a return to school (Caplan, 1974). That a return to school constitutes a major life transition can readily be seen in a series of longitudinal studies done at the larger of the two universities investigated in this study. The average completion rate of women returning as freshmen six years after their first enrollment was 21%, 30.7% when classified as sophmores at their first enrollment. The students were tracked from 1983 to 1988 (Smith, 1994).

*Methodology:* A population of 1661 women age 25 and over were identified from enrollment lists of two major state supported universities in Oklahoma, one with an enrollment of approximately 19,000 students, the other with an enrollment of approximately 18,000. Social Support Inventories (SSI) were sent to all 1661 non-traditional women students, 1060 of whom attended the larger university in an urban/suburban setting and 601 who attended the smaller of the two universities in a rural setting. A total of 577 surveys were returned for a response rate of 35%. Because the response rate was relatively low and because only one mailing was sent, a total of 25 non-respondents were contacted by telephone.

*Findings:* Research conducted was two-fold; to establish baseline normative data for women returning to school using the SSI and to examine support from minority women and lower socioeconomic groups. Initial findings revealed that the response rate itself was biased toward white, middle class non-traditional students. Although African Americans represented 7.47% of the urban university student population and 2.1% of the rural university student population, they represented only 2.8% of the pooled responses. While Whites represented 82.6% of the rural university and 72.6% of the urban university, they were 75% of the pooled responses. American Indians were proportionately represented among the pooled responses. Hispanics were slightly overrepresented. Forty-two of the respondents declined to report ethnicity.

The first research question addressed the relationship between social support and GPA. The results showed that students with GPAs of 2.5 or better received

medium and low social support. However, students with GPAs less than 2.5 were receiving low social support (Chi square value = 21.09,  $p < .05$ ).

The second research question addressed the difference in social support between those receiving financial aid and those who did not. Women not receiving financial aid are receiving the most emotional support (subscale mean = 45.17) while those receiving financial aid reported receiving less emotional support (subscale mean = 41.48;  $p < .05$ ).

The third research question addressed differences in SSI scores by ethnicity. Using a Chi Square Analysis on high, medium and low support by women categorized as either white or minorities, it was seen that minority women reported lower SSI scores than white women. Minority women reported receiving low support (63.16%) while 48.57% of white students reported low support (Chi Square = 9.86,  $p < .01$ ). And 35.5% minority women reported receiving medium support while 50.11% of white women receive medium support.

Professionals and service providers such as professors, academic counselors and caseworkers were reported as giving extremely low emotional and network support. The qualitative data of this survey was illustrative of the problem and the dimensions of family support. Unsolicited comments written on the returns communicated surprise that anyone related to the university cared enough to survey their opinions. Another qualitative finding was a feeling of isolation which could be seen in comments such as, "I wonder if there are more women like me who think that no one cares." Another observed, "I never realized what a lonely trek this process of educating myself was until I sat down to fill out this form. Except for the love and support of my children, I have been completely isolated and that isolation is beginning to wear me down. It can be quite depressing." Another respondent wrote the following: "As I fill out your questionnaire I feel the need to tell you that going back to school is one of the hardest things I ever did." Shock with the system was a sentiment expressed. "After being out of college for 5 years, I didn't know where things were located--parking is impossible." Finally, as a graphic example of family systems theory as it relates to women returning to school, one of the subjects commented:

I don't have a lot of chance to study because of household responsibilities and work. Then there is the added expense. I'm working less. Although my husband supports my going back to school and helps me with the house, it seems she wasn't feeling good about himself which added an immense amount of stress and heartache. I question if my returning to school could have contributed to the problems my husband and I are trying to work through or brought them to the surface."

**Conclusions:** The research questions addressed in this study were only moderately conclusive. The expected outcome on the relationship of GPA with SSI scores was that women with high GPAs would also report high SSI scores. However, it was seen that women with high GPAs reported receiving low to medium support which, perhaps, reflects on the resiliency of women returning to higher education in Oklahoma. The low response rate overall could be understood by the differences in respondents and non-respondents. The non respondent sample had a GPA of 2.9, whereas the respondent sample reported a mean GPA 3.83. Perhaps only the brightest and the motivated returned their surveys. One conclusion not addressed in the research questions, however, reinforces a finding of the College Board (Aslanian and Brickell, 1988): whites are over represented in higher education while various



minority groups are under represented. Qualitative data added context to enhance an understanding of the full meaning of family support.

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